

A * * *
CONCISE
MANUAL
OF * * *
BAPTISM

John Looke

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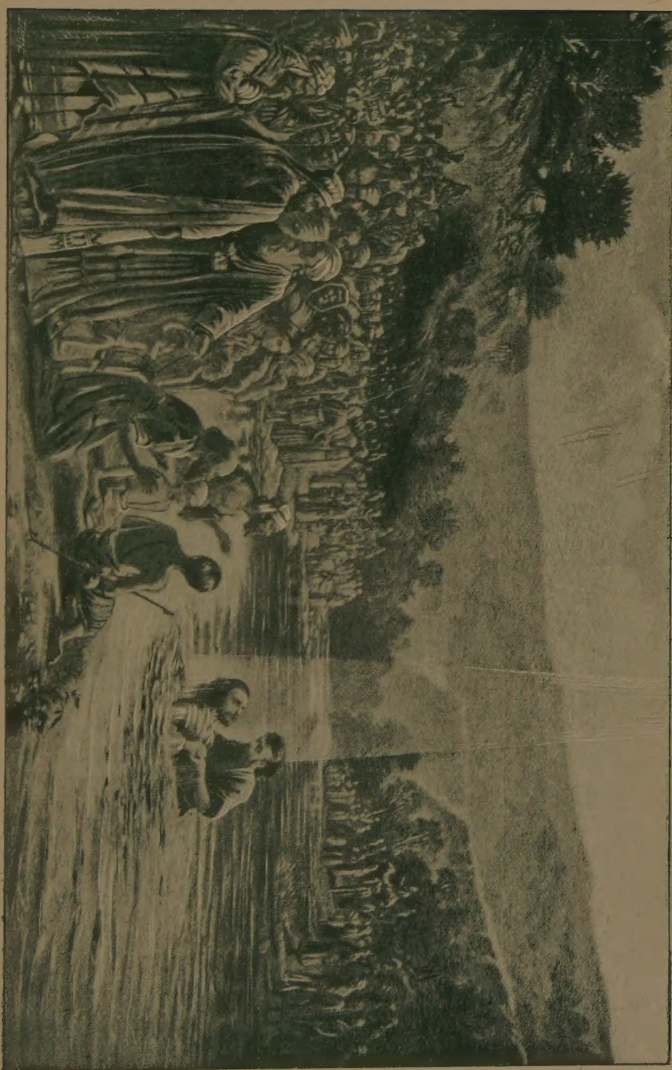
A Concise Manual of Baptism.



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A CONCISE MANUAL OF BAPTISM.



THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST IN JORDAN.

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By **J. HUNT COOKE.**

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PREFACE.



A FEW grains of wheat from the great store-house of argument in favour of the position of Baptists in relation to Baptism are here given. Our young people ought to be instructed upon this subject. They need a concise statement, enough to prove, and not enough to burden. The fact is we often suffer in our defence from the multitude of witnesses wearying the court. Recently more than one admirable defence of the Pædobaptist position, condensed and suited to the young, have been published. The reverend spirit and earnest tone of these works are worthy of high praise. They make out a certain case for our opponents, and their arguments ought to be met. Christians should ever be ready to give a reason for their belief. True oneness is not to be sought by suppression but rather by free utterance. Baptists are especially called upon to defend their practice, and are guilty of censurable schism unless they have reason for their distinctive attitude. They must have a special message from God for their

age or they have no justification for their separation. They have a vocation to call attention to a sad but popular perversion of one of the foremost commands of our Lord. In love, they must give their testimony.

The aim of this little book is to provide a manual on Baptism for the young people of Baptist congregations, for either private or class study. It is believed that there are not a few pastors who will gladly welcome such a compendium, and be pleased to use it as a text-book for a winter's study for their young people. Baptists to-day need a little more strengthening of stake as well as lengthening of cord. It is feeble to complain of being held in disrespect when little attempt is being made to justify our position. It is vain to mourn the lapse of friends when nothing is done to teach them why they should subject themselves and families to the privation and disdain of separation.

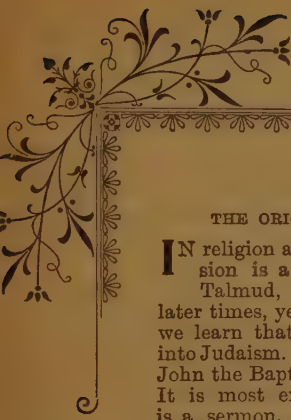
Though small, this work is the result of much research and careful selection. All quotations have been translated, especially for this work, from the best editions available of the original writings. In the name, for the sake, and with prayer for the blessing of that beloved Master whose ordinance is with many of none effect by tradition, this little work is sent forth.



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Chapter i.

THE ORIGIN OF THE RITE OF BAPTISM.

IN religion an initiatory rite is needed. Immersion is a very expressive form. From the Talmud, which if not reduced to writing till later times, yet is a very valuable traditional work, we learn that baptism was part of the initiation into Judaism. It is still in use in synagogues. John the Baptist and our Lord adopted that mode. It is most expressive. True Christian baptism is a sermon, and almost invariably connected with sound doctrine.



IN every form of religion there is need of an introductory rite. This was especially felt amongst the people of the East and in the earlier ages of human history. It is desirable that the ceremony should be symbolical, setting forth in a figure the truth professed. For this purpose it would be difficult to find any method more expressive than that of immersion in water. It is suggestive of entire purification from the past, of the cleansing and dyeing with new color, of burial and resurrection, and similar ideas associated with a regenerated life. In the outer court of the tabernacle there stood a laver and an altar, for lustration and sacrifice are primitive religious ideas.

FIRST SUPPOSED MENTION.

In the life of the Patriarch Jacob we read (Gen. xxxv.) that on his return to Canaan, God said unto him, "Arise

and go to Bethel and dwell there, and make thou an altar unto God." This involved on the part of his retainers a change of religion. "Then Jacob said unto his household, and all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean, and change your garments and let us arise, and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." Thus they were to give expression to an intelligent acceptance of the worship of God, and marked it by a definite rite. The ancient Rabbis assert that here is the origin of Baptism.

JEWISH PROSELYTE BAPTISM.

Among the Jews from the earliest times proselytes from other forms of religion were baptized. So it is to-day. Aben Ezra, a great authority amongst them, says the command to "be clean" means washing the body in water. Maimonides, one of their greatest masters of the Law, says, "Whosoever any heathen will betake himself and be joined to the covenant of Israel, and place himself under the wings of the Divine Majesty, and take the yoke of the law upon him, voluntary circumcision, baptism, and oblation are required; but if it be a woman, baptism and oblation." Amongst the Jews it is a common axiom that a man is but a proselyte until he be both circumcised and baptized. The directions are very particular. The baptistery is to be a cubit square and three cubits deep. The water must be running through; three authoritative witnesses are required; even in the case of a woman they must be present, but turn away their eyes as she comes out so as not to look at her. If but the tip of the finger or a hair of the

head has not been immersed, the baptism is not valid. Amongst Jewish women baptism is also incumbent upon mothers after the birth of a child. It is recorded that in the days of Joshua Ben Levi some endeavored to abolish dipping for the sake of the women of Galilee who suffered from the cold. The Rabbi reproved them, saying, "Do ye go about to take away that which hedges in Israel from transgression?" In modern synagogues in our own land there are baptisteries with all suitable appliances. Rabbinical instructions on the subject are numerous, but one thing remains certain. For initiation into Judaism in all ages the entire immersion of the body in water has been the distinctive ceremony, really more important than circumcision. The Jews have never encouraged proselytism, believing the distinctive glory of their religion to be descent by "blood" (see John i. 13). Maimonides tells us that numbers sought admission in the days of Solomon, but the chief priests would not accept them. "Yet abundance of proselytes were made in the days of David and Solomon before private men, and the great Sanhedrin was full of care about this business, for they would not cast them out because they were baptized."

NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM.

In the days when our Lord was upon this earth baptism as an initiatory rite and a mode of profession was no new thing. Its adoption was that of a practice well known and understood by the people. Thus we find that when John appeared as the forerunner of Christ preaching repentance, the people naturally accepted his teaching as a new religion, and gave in their adherence in the way generally understood, by baptism, and he

accepted their profession. So he was called John the Baptist, or the Dipper. And when, in later times, in the fuller light of the Gospel dispensation, Paul found men who had never heard of the Holy Ghost, he taught them what was actually a new religion. Hence although they had been baptized with the baptism of penitence they professed a new faith and were again baptized. So at Pentecost, they who gladly received the Gospel at once professed their acceptance by baptism. Then by the descent of the Holy Ghost the fundamental revelation of the grace of God was complete, and the ordinance itself was baptized in the name of the Father (as in John's baptism) and of the Son (as in the previous baptism by His disciples), and of the Holy Ghost (then given in His glorious fulness).

WHO ARE BAPTISTS.

By Baptists we mean those who observe this ordinance. It is one of the most mysterious facts of Church History that from a very early period there has been amongst professed followers of Jesus Christ a perversion of the ordinance and the substitution of a ceremony of another character. But through all the ages of Christendom there have been humble followers of Jesus Christ who have remembered His words, and refused "to make the command of God of none effect by tradition." They have not ever been called Baptists. That is a term of modern origin, like most denominational names. It is an interesting fact that, for the most part, obedience to Christ's precept with regard to baptism has been connected with purity of faith and practice. With infant sprinkling in the West and infant baptism in the East, every error, doctrinal and ecclesiastical, has been found. All the

various systems of apostacy reject this ordinance of our Lord. But wherever it has been preserved as He appointed it there has been also ever purity of doctrine and practice. Not invariably, it is true; nevertheless, its association with false teaching has generally been short-lived. For example, in modern times some few endowed Baptist Churches have lapsed into Unitarianism; in each case the ordinance soon became neglected. A Church denying the Deity of our Lord with a living observance of baptism, can scarcely be found. The right administration of Christian baptism is a most powerful sermon. It proclaims the necessity of the new birth and the thoroughness of true piety. It declares the individuality of religion. It teaches the Deity of our Lord and the personality of the Divine Spirit. True baptism and doctrinal error can never live in happy or even in peaceful union. They are internecine foes; and if in the same Church, sooner or later one or the other must be expelled.



Chapter ii.

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD.

THIS occupies a prominent place in the Gospel narrative. He is our great exemplar and baptism was His first example. There are seven unquestioned points in the narrative which ought to be carefully pondered.



THE baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ has a very prominent position in the narrative of His Life. By each of the four Evangelists the story is vividly told. With the exception of an incident in His childhood, this is the first thing brought to our attention. Although He was nearly thirty years of age, yet with this act His life, for us, may be said to commence.

FOLLOWING CHRIST.

The most satisfactory evidence of regeneration is the loving desire to follow the example of Christ. Without conversion there is no entrance into the Kingdom of God. Those who are anxious for some test of having been born again, of having been the subject of genuine repentance

and faith, of having felt the power of the Holy Ghost, should seek it in the desire and endeavor to make Jesus Christ the great example of life and holiness. They will do well to beware of looking too much to the opinions and actions of other persons round about them and resolve to be simply "looking unto Jesus."

THE FIRST EXAMPLE.

It is ever well to begin at the beginning. Believing on the atonement of Christ and from grateful love desiring to please Him, as the very least return for His Divine mercy, we desire to do His will. Opening the New Testament—our surest guide—and beginning with Matthew, we find that immediately after the beautiful story of Christ's birth comes an account of His baptism. Luke commences, in his resolve to "set forth in order the things surely believed," by telling of the birth of John the Baptizer at considerable length, and the first incident recorded of Christ when He became a man is that of His baptism. John opens his Gospel with the sublime statement of the Deity of our Lord, but as soon as he begins to show that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" he tells of His baptism. All this is noteworthy, showing us that it was no unimportant incident in Christ's early career.

THE INCIDENT.

John was baptizing in the River Jordan. Jesus was residing at Nazareth, perhaps twenty-five miles away. This, in those days, must have been a very long journey. That the baptism was by immersion in the water of the river is evident. No scholar at the present time expresses any doubt of this. Now, the Evangelist is careful to tell us that Jesus had been circumcised. Some persons say

that infant sprinkling takes the place of circumcision. Were that proved, it would not very materially affect our argument. Without any reference to His circumcision in His childhood, Jesus Christ insisted on baptism. The reason our Lord stated, on the objection of the Baptist, is very memorable. He said: "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Christ needed that to complete the rightness of His life. Will the humble disciple care to imagine that he can "fulfil all righteousness," make his life complete, without that which seemed so important to his Lord?

SEVEN IMPORTANT POINTS.

Looking at the narrative for our own sanctification, let us carefully ponder over these unquestioned points:—

1. Jesus was immersed.
2. It was His own act.
3. He deemed it necessary to "fulfil all righteousness."
4. He did not consider that any rite administered to Him in infancy excused Him from this.
5. The record takes a prominent place in the Evangelical history.
6. The baptism was the commencement of a new course of life.
7. It received in a very remarkable way the seal of the Divine approval.



GUNDLACUMMA RIVER, WHERE 2,222 WERE BAPTIZED IN ONE DAY.



Chapter iii.

THE BAPTISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.



AN examination of the teaching of the New Testament, noting each narrative and allusion to Baptism.



“WHEN they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” This was the first result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Clear as daylight here is the definition of the ordinance. It was administered to those who “gladly received.” No mention is made of unintelligent infants. There is a mention of children (see v. 17) and of those who were far away, that for them too was the promise; but no direction that any should be baptized before they received it by faith. Those who were baptized “continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers,” an evidence that there were no infants among them. The mist which was raised here by the Council of Trent, that it was impossible to immerse such a number of persons in one day, has been recently dispelled by the fact that six Baptist missionaries at Velumpilly, in India, in July, 1878, baptized two thousand two hundred and twenty-two converts in nine hours. “The number of names was one hundred and twenty,”

so that eight of these could have accomplished the task. In Jerusalem at that period there were many open pools, and just outside the city a number of running streams; there were also many synagogues (Josephus states there were several hundred), to which probably baptisteries were attached. The Essenes were a numerous sect; its followers were directed to be baptized afresh by immersion every day. All apparent impossibilities disappear on full inquiry; but if they did not, if it were exceedingly difficult, almost impossible, to understand how it was accomplished, nevertheless the record comes with inspired authority which should suffice for our belief.

NARRATIVES OF BAPTISM.

The next account of a baptism after that of Pentecost was on the occasion of a great awakening at Samaria through the preaching of Philip. "When they believed" they were baptized, "both men and women." This latter clause, not necessary to the narrative otherwise, states a restriction: the candidate gave proof of belief first, and received the ordinance with intelligence. The baptism of the Eunuch of Candace and of Saul of Tarsus were doubtless by immersion on profession, and in neither case does the question of infants enter. But it would be very remarkable and really inexplicable, if it were intended that the rite should be administered to new-born babes, that there is not one precept, not one single example, of it being so observed. On the other hand, every case recorded makes it clear that in that instance there were no children, the phrase "men and women" occurring once and again.

SIMON MAGUS.

Special mention is due to the incident of the baptism

of Simon Magus recorded in the eighth chapter of the Book of Acts, of whom Peter afterwards said "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." We must carefully note that in the thirteenth verse it is recorded "Then Simon himself believed also and was baptized." So that at the most it was but the baptism of a hypocrite, from which no minister can wholly escape. Still the subsequent request for the prayer of Peter might indicate rather a very serious fault than a totally unregenerate state. The narrative suggests that "the matter" to which the Apostle referred, and on which the man's heart was not right, was an ambition for the apostolic office and the desire to obtain the dignity by purchase. Unhappily an offence in our own day, committed even by some whom we should not be willing to class with the unsaved: certainly not if they showed penitence as soon as the sin was pointed out.

ALLUSIONS TO BAPTISM.

We go further. Every allusion in the Epistles is daylight on believers' immersion, and midnight on infant sprinkling. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Galatians, says: "As many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ." Surely there were some infants in the families in the Galatian Church too young to have "put on Christ." These must then have been unbaptized, for in the church all the baptized were walking consistent with their profession. There is here probably a reference to the change of dress after baptism, an idea underlying the instruction to the Ephesians. (Eph. iv. 22-24.) This appears to have been an important part of Jewish proselyte baptism, based on Genesis xxxv. 2. In the early church the newly baptized dressed in white robes, for

several days after attending to the ordinance. (See Rev. iii. 4.) In Romans (vi. 3, 4), and in Colossians (ii. 12), baptism is spoken of as burial and resurrection; terms utterly devoid of meaning when the Roman ceremony is performed, but full of solemn and soul-searching instruction when true baptism is considered. Peter (I. Peter iii. 21) gives a singularly clear and comprehensive view of the ordinance. "Baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation or inquiry, or appeal, or answer of a good conscience toward God." That is to say, baptism consists of two parts: First, outward washing by water; Secondly, inward consecration, profession. And the saving part of the ordinance is not the former, but the latter. In sprinkling infants there is neither of these. A somewhat curious allusion is found in I. Cor. x. 1, 2: "for I would not, brethren, have you ignorant how that our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The argument has been advanced in the past that this was by sprinkling, the night breezes blowing the sea spray in the faces of the people; but probably few would be convinced by such eccentric reasoning now. The baptism was in the cloud; into that cloud they went down and came up again, and that cloud was in the sea. It was a baptism in mist, and was at the commencement of that wilderness to Canaan which is a type of the Christian career, from the Egyptian bondage of sin, sustained by the smitten rock, till the river be crossed and the promised land attained. The Apostle's expression of the unity of the true Church, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5.) indicates a defined practice. Baptism was not in some cases a profession, in some a

dedication; observed sometimes by immersion, sometimes by pouring, sometimes by sprinkling. There was uniformity in regard to this ordinance in apostolic days, and we have seen that every recorded case and every allusion points to believers' immersion, and not a single case or allusion indicates either sprinkling or the administration to infants. Complete silence is surely not the Divine way of giving a precept. It is a curious doctrine that we are to look away from the church at its best estate to the church at its worst for illustration of the prime ordinance of Christianity.

BAPTISM A MIRROR.

Near the west door of a church in a French city, there is a marble basin filled with water. It is so placed that the surface of the clear pool becomes a mirror, which, looked at from without, reflects the noble exterior of the church. This is an emblem of baptism—the pool which the great Architect has placed at the gate of the church. And if we look at it aright we may see a reflection of the interior, for baptism is a mirror shewing many celestial truths. First, it sets forth the burial and resurrection of Christ. Christianity is founded on a fact; that fact is, Jesus died, was buried, and rose again from the dead. Then baptism sets forth the believer's death to sin and rising anew to righteousness in consequence of faith. Believing that his Lord was cast out of the world, he vows to be separate from the world. Believing that the Saviour rose from the grave, he resolves to rise with him to the better and holier life. So baptism tells of entire, intelligent consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ, and also of being immersed into the Spirit of God, and tinged, dyed with the holy color of his grace.



Chapter iv.

ON THE BAPTISM OF HOUSEHOLDS

THE first mention of households in Scripture indicates that children were not included in the term. The word is generally used only in reference to those dwelling in a house who have arrived at years of discretion. The households mentioned in the New Testament are those of Lydia and the jailor at Philippi, and the probability is that in neither case were there infants. There is also reference to the household of Stephanas, but there is added that they addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints; and to the house of Crispus, of which Paul baptized only the head.



THE first mention of a household in the Bible is that of Abraham (Gen. xviii. 19), when God said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." The inference from this passage is that the term "household" does not necessarily include the children of a family. They are mentioned as separate. It here refers to dependents and others dwelling with the chief. The second time the word occurs is in Gen. xxxv. 2, 3: "Then Jacob said unto his household, and all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and change your garments, and let us arise and go

up to Bethel." The children of Jacob at that time were all grown up. It is clear that whatever was meant by "household" here, the members were all intelligent enough to turn from idolatry and attend to an act of worship at Bethel. These, the first two instances of the use of the term "household," may convince us that the word does not necessarily connote infants. Passages may be found in which possibly infants were included; but others in which they evidently were not—as in the place where Joseph is said to have been made ruler over the house of Pharaoh, where the meaning clearly is over his public affairs, not over his nursery; and where we read, the household of Zabdi (Josh. vii. 18) was taken by Joshua, "man by man." This may be sufficient to prove not that the word "household," when used in Holy Scripture, never includes children, but that sometimes it is used only in reference to those persons dwelling in the house who have arrived at years of intelligence.

NEW TESTAMENT HOUSEHOLDS.

We proceed to the New Testament, and find the word used in the same way. In the cases in which it is there mentioned, the word "household" may have been used to include children, or it may not. In each instance we may get at the truth by examining the context. First of all we ought not to overlook this, that in every other case where baptism is mentioned it is clear that it only refers to persons of intelligence. On the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 41) it was administered to those that gladly received the apostles' word—"And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers."

So that there is no mention of children amongst the great number received on the day of the founding of the Church of God upon earth; or, if of children, they were those capable of receiving the Gospel message with gladness, and were added to the Church. When Philip's ministry was remarkably blessed in Samaria, it is unmistakably stated (Acts viii. 12), "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Neither, then, at Pentecost, or the first recorded case of evangelistic work, if we keep within the record, was baptism administered to unconscious babes.

HOUSEHOLD OF LYDIA.

The first mention of the baptism of a household is that of Lydia (Acts xvi. 13-15)—"And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us." Let us look at this with a little common sense. First, Lydia was at the head; it was her household; hence she was not a married woman. Secondly, she must have been far away from her home—perhaps a couple of hundred miles—travelling for business, hence it is highly improbable that she had any children with her. Her household was doubtless her assistants in her sale of purple cloth. Still, further, the

narrative only mentions women. The conclusion is certainly reasonable that there were no unconscious infants baptized that day.

THE JAILOR'S HOUSEHOLD.

The other case is that of the jailor at Philippi. Read the story carefully (Acts xvi. 29-34). Paul and Silas were in prison. At midnight there was an earthquake, bringing them freedom. The jailor was alarmed. "He called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas. And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in the house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." Let our Pædobaptist friends carefully examine this. It is the strongest part of their case. There is certainly a possibility that the jailor had a family. He of course had a retinue of assistants and other persons with him. But had he any unconscious babes? We say No; or if there were, they were not included in the household Paul baptized, and for these sufficient reasons: First, Paul preached to all that were in the house; secondly, all that were in the house believed. The rejoicing and believing were co-extensive with the baptizing. It is a curious point here that there is no mention of the household being baptized, only "he and all his." The baptism appears to have taken place outside the house. All know that often there were pools of water in

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the courts of a large dwelling. After the service the jailor "brought them into his house, and set meat before them." Had little infants been brought out in the middle of the night there is a probability that so interesting an event would have been recorded.

NOTICES OF OTHER HOUSEHOLDS.

These are the two recorded instances. There is an incidental notice of another baptized household. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians (I. Cor. i. 16) says, "I baptized also the household of Stephanas." But at the close of the Epistle he writes (I. Cor. xvi. 15), "The house of Stephanas have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." All we ask here is that the term shall be taken in the same sense in both passages. They were baptized, and they were addicted to the ministry of the saints. Then certainly in that household there were no unconscious infants.

CONCLUSION.

Now we have examined every reference in the Bible to household baptism, and have seen that in each case the household was baptized as a believing household. There is one interesting incident in which we have mention of a whole household believing and, [by the Apostle, at the time,] only the head being baptized (Acts xviii. 8). When Paul was at Corinth, "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Paul alluding to this (I. Cor. i. 14) says, "I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius." Probably the other members of the household were baptized; but this passage does not say so, nor does it sustain the popular but erroneous notion that when an apostle

baptized a believer he baptized all his family at the same time. The Council of Trent, the great Romish authority on religion, thus defends the admission of little children to baptism. "When we read that some entire family was baptized by Paul (see I. Cor. i. 16 ; Acts xvi. 33), children who were of their number must, it is sufficiently obvious, have also been cleansed at the salutary font." It is unfortunate that Protestants still hold by this Romish delusion. An endeavor has been made in these pages, with candor and without prejudice, to "open the Scriptures" on the question. And the reader is left to draw his own conclusions.



Chapter II.

ORIGIN OF INFANT SPRINKLING.

BELIEVERS' immersion is derived from the practice of the apostles. But the origin of infant sprinkling is doubtful. The Romish idea is that it was a desirable development of apostolic practice. Rome desired gorgeous ceremonial, and hence introduced modified pagan rites into Christian worship. Amongst the heathen there appears to have been a dedicatory ceremony for babes. Instances in Norse and Irish ancient literature may be found. It was a misfortune that the Reformers did not come fully out, and purifying themselves from head to foot of the evil past, arising to a new and changed Christian course—with Christ, not history, the New Testament, and not tradition, for their guide.

WHETHER the practice of immersion on a profession of faith as the seal of Christian discipleship was adopted by our Lord and His apostles from a Jewish ceremony or not, it is certain that it was the practice in New Testament times. Not a single case is recorded of infant sprinkling. The practice, then, must either be a development or derived from some other source. In its idea and emblematic meaning it differs so widely from Scriptural baptism that it is not easy to accept the Romish doctrine, which is now the general view, that it is a slight but permissible change, a desirable development of the ordinance. On the other hand, copious evidence may be adduced that it was a pagan rite introduced into the Church and given a Christian meaning.

A DEPARTURE FROM THE GOSPEL SIMPLICITY.

It is the chief secret of the great Papal apostacy that as the Church of Rome grew into affluence she departed from the simplicity of the Gospel. With wealth and worldly grandeur came a distaste for spiritual worship. As the simple, unworldly piety of the New Testament was unsuited to gorgeous ceremony, the rites of paganism were imitated. Thus not only in her struggle for universal dominion but also in her symbolical observances Rome became the successor to Babylon. Papal Rome was pagan Rome with new phraseology. The sprinklings and lustrations of heathenism formed part of the functions of the declining Church of God. Purification amongst the heathen appears to have been sometimes by fire and sometimes by water. Dedication of children, a rite which has no authority from the New Testament, and really no place in the Christian Church, was common in ancient times. It was frequently by fire. Manasseh in olden days introduced the abominations of the heathen; prominent among these "he made his son pass through the fire," as did Ahaz just previously, and many of the idolatrous people. And this designation of the little ones by a pagan derived ceremony was offensive to God. The sin being in the adoption by a people who were to stand in all things opposed to the heathenism around, of a practice for which there was no Divine authority.

PAGAN IN ITS ORIGIN.

Evidence is now clear that about the age of the introduction of Christianity there was a rite among the Norsemen called *Ausa Vatni*. Vigfusson says the word was a standing phrase for a sort of baptism used in the last centuries, at least, of the heathen age. The child

when born was sprinkled with water and named. This rite is mentioned as early as in the "Hávamá," one of the very oldest mythological didactic poems on record, where it is attributed even to Odin. The passage is thus translated in the "Corpus Poeticum Boreale" (i. 27): "If I sprinkle water on a young lord, he shall never fall, though he go to battle, he will be proof against the swords." In this instance, however, it may not refer to a babe. Professor T. M. Lindsey, in an article in the recent edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" (ninth edition), states that in early Christian times there was often a "double baptism—one pagan and civil, the other religious, and Christian which existed side by side with each other in Norway and Iceland. The pagan rite was called *Ausa Vatni*, while the name for Christian baptism was *Skero*. The pagan rite was much older than the introduction of Christianity, and was connected with the savage custom of exposing infants who were not to be brought up. The newly born infant was presented to the father, who was to decide whether the child was to be reared or not. If he decided to rear it, then water was poured over the child and the father gave it a name; if it was exposed, then the ceremony was not gone through. The point to be observed is that if the child was exposed by any one after the ceremony had been gone through it was a case of murder, whereas it was not thought a crime if the child was made away with before water had been poured over it and it had been named." The point we may notice is that in the Pope-governed churches the pagan usurped the place of the Christian ordinance. Baptizing was exchanged for pouring; and the practice of naming, which has no New

Testament authority, was introduced, so also the idea of the ceremony placing the child in an altered relationship. Some parents even now refuse to kiss the little innocent babe before it has been christened.

OLD NARRATIVES.

In the romantic old Irish literature there are several references to the pagan custom. In the "*Voyage of the Húi Corra*" there is a narrative of three children being born. The story proceeds thus: "And they were baptized according to the heathen baptism, and these were their names, Lochán, and Ende and Silvester." In the "*Cóir Anmann*": "The damsel's time arrived, and she bore a son. Druids came to baptize the boy into heathenism, and they chanted the heathen baptism over the little child, and they said: 'Never shall be born a boy who will be more impious than this boy towards the Connaughtmen; and not a night will he be without a Connaughtman's head on his girdle, and he will kill more than half of the men of Connaught.'" Cet Mac Magach, the boy's maternal uncle, then gives him the name of Conall, and he grows up to be the hero Cernach. In the story of "*The Birth of Brandub and Eogan*," at the same day two queens have each twins, one has twin sons, the other twin daughters; one exchanges a son for a daughter, the other a daughter for a son. The tale proceeds thus: "The boys are baptized first and the two girls afterwards. And at the baptism the druid gave them the names of Aed and Brandub." In all these Irish cases the naming of the child is associated with its ceremonial cleansing. So in the ceremony of the Roman lustration of infants each received a name.

MODERN PAGAN RITES.

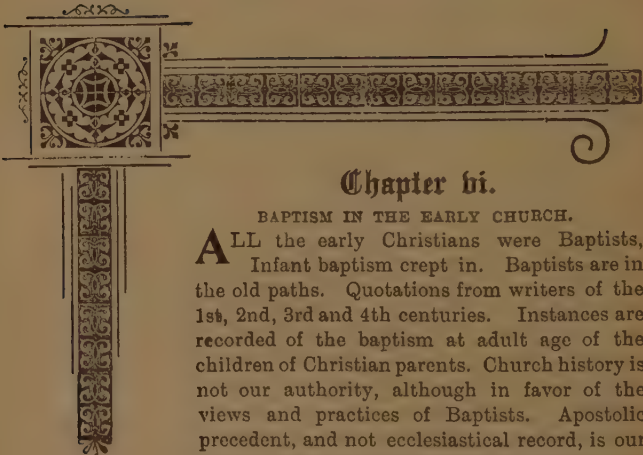
In modern narratives of visits to Mexico and the Slave Coast of Africa the practice has been found of touching infants with water and naming them with certain religious ceremonies. As this might have been derived from Christianity, it cannot be used as evidence. The late Colonel Ellis gives the following account of what he witnessed on the Slave Coast: "Seven days after birth, if the child be a girl; nine days if it be a boy, follows a ceremony which appears to be one of purification. The water, which is always in the earthen vessels placed before the images of the gods, is brought to the house and thrown up on the thatched roof, and as it drips from the eaves the mother and child passes three times through the falling drops. The babalawo next makes a water of purification, with which he bathes the child's head; he repeats three times the name by which the infant is to be known, and then holds him in his arms so that his feet touch the ground." Prescott relates of the Aztecs in his "History of Mexico": "After a solemn invocation, the head and lips of the infant were touched with water, and a name was given to it, while the goddess Cioacoatl, who presided over childbirth, was implored that the sin which was given to us before the beginning of the world might not visit the child, but that cleansed by these waters it might live and be born anew."

It may be noted that whilst we do not find amongst the pagans any travesty of Christian baptism there is evidence of sympathy with the lustration of infants as a rite congenial to the unenlightened religious instinct.

IMPERFECTION OF THE REFORMATION.

Looking back to the Reformation, with all reverence for

the great men who guided that vast movement, and all honour to their discernment and courage, we yet feel that their method was a mistake. The apostacy had gone so far that what was needed was not reform, but renaissance. The better plan—perhaps, however, it was not possible—would have been to have come right out, rejected the whole of the so-called Christianity of the age, and, going to the New Testament, to have commenced entirely anew. The protest should not have been merely against certain evils, but against the system which had wrought those evils. The fruit was bad, and the tree should have been plucked up by the roots. Well would it have been had the Reformers laid aside as a filthy garment all their previous profession, and began at the beginning. By immersion they should have professed a thorough cleansing from head to foot from the evil past, and arising to a new and changed Christian career; with Christ, not history, the New Testament, not tradition, for their guide. Even now we feel the effects of a partial sprinkling, instead of a thorough plunging into pure Christianity. Each generation has to struggle against the ever uprising Romeward tendencies, for a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Popery has scarcely an observance which does not savour as much, if not more, of the Temple of Jupiter than of the Day of Pentecost. And the churches will never be free from the degrading influences of Rome, both papal and pagan, so long as infant baptism abides in their midst as a power for making the command of God of none effect by the traditions of men.



Chapter vi.

BAPTISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

ALL the early Christians were Baptists, Infant baptism crept in. Baptists are in the old paths. Quotations from writers of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries. Instances are recorded of the baptism at adult age of the children of Christian parents. Church history is not our authority, although in favor of the views and practices of Baptists. Apostolic precedent, and not ecclesiastical record, is our guide. Extracts given from the Didache, and the Shepherd of Hermas.

THE effort to trace a Baptist section of the church during the first few centuries of the Christian era is founded on a mistake. All the early Christians were Baptists. Infant sprinkling was unknown. After a while infant baptism crept in, but there is considerable proof that it was centuries before it became general. Baptists are walking in the old paths. It is their opponents who are the schismatics, and who have divided Christians by introducing a novelty unknown to the apostles. Repeatedly separate churches were formed, protesting against errors as they arose, and some have endeavored to trace a history of Baptists through these.

There is no doubt that all the way along there have been believers who have held the truth as it is in Jesus, and followed the apostolic precedent of the ordinances. But church history has been in the hands of Rome, and records have been suppressed or distorted to suit her aims. It is an awful charge but a true one, that Roman historians have falsified history. Still there are ancient writings extant, and from these much may be learned.

THE FIRST CENTURY.

Barnabas wrote: "We go down into the water full of sins and uncleanness, and come up bearing fruit in the heart, fear and hope towards Jesus, having the Spirit." Hermas wrote: "That seal is the water of baptism, into which men go down sentenced to death, but come up assigned to life." Clearly these are inapplicable either to infants or to sprinkling.

THE SECOND CENTURY.

Justin Martyr wrote: "In this manner we have consecrated ourselves to God, made new through Christ we set it forth lest we should be blameworthy if we do not explain. As many as are persuaded and believe these things to be true which are taught and asserted by us and promise to be able to live accordingly, they are taught to pray with fasting and to ask God for forgiveness of former offences we also praying and fasting with them. Then we lead to a place where there is water, and in the same manner as we were regenerated they are regenerated. In the name of the Father of all and the Divine Master and of Our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit, in the water then they make their bath." We note that utmost care was taken to test the genuineness

of the profession. The term regeneration is here evidently used not of a change of heart, which was previously required, but a change of life such as is professed by all who are truly baptized; note the words, "made new through Christ we set it forth." The expression, "in the same manner as we were," indicates that there was only one baptism, and that was by immersion, on confession of faith and promise of a corresponding life.

THE THIRD CENTURY.

Hippolytus wrote referring to Isaiah i. 16, "Wash you, make you clean"; "See beloved how the prophet foretold the purifying of baptism, for he who goes down with faith into the bath of regeneration leaves the ranks of the Devil and joins the ranks of Christ; he denies the enemy and confesses that Christ is God. He disrobes himself of slavery, and enrobes himself with adoption. He returns from baptism shining as the sun, flashing with rays of righteousness. Greatest of all he goes forth a son of God and an heir of Christ." There is no mention here of bringing the children to baptism. In the figurative style of that age, Hippolytus speaks of faith and charity as two handmaids bringing towels, intimating that baptism was immersion. The regeneration here spoken of is that of Peter (see I. Peter iii. 21)—not the outward cleansing, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.

THE FOURTH CENTURY.

Cyril, of Jerusalem, wrote catechetical discourses for the instruction of those preparing for baptism, noting that the church did not give baptism immediately to those who desired it, but only to those who had given signs of a

sincere faith and a change of life. He speaks of the importance of being surrounded on all sides with water, as the apostles were baptized in the Holy Ghost ; with this difference, however, that whilst water can only reach the outer surface of the body, the Holy Ghost pervades the inner soul. He thus describes a baptism : " You confessed the salvation confession, and were plunged down thrice into the water and thrice brought up, and thus by symbol you shadowed forth the three days' burial of Christ. And in this you died and were re-born. And that salvation water became to you both a tomb and a mother."

CHILDREN OF PIOUS PARENTS.

The extracts already given may suffice. More of the same character can easily be found. To avoid misapprehension we must remember that there was a want of exact theological terms in those days, and the writers abounded in metaphors. Instances of persons who, although the children of pious parents, yet had not been baptized in infancy, are many. Gregory Nazianzen was the son of a bishop, but was not baptized until he was thirty years of age. Basil had parents and grandfather of distinguished piety, yet was not baptized until twenty years of age. Ephrem, born of martyrs, was eighteen years of age ; Chrysostom was twenty-eight, and Ambrosius was thirty-four when baptized, and these were all children of parents professing Christianity. Monica, the mother of Augustine, was renowned for her holy life, but her son was not baptized until the age of thirty-two. Corroborative evidence is found in the fact that at periods of calamity, such as the outbreak of pestilence or war, when life

became insecure, great numbers rushed to the baptisteries to be baptized, showing that infant baptism was far from being general amongst persons who recognized the truth of Christianity. In the early church sermons extant there are found exhortations to children of godly parents to be baptized. Basil the Great says: "Do not demur and put it off, when you have been from a child catechised in the word, When will you become one of us?" The proof which is sometimes asked for, is ample that in the early church not only converts from heathenism, but the children of baptized parents had to come voluntarily and seek baptism. It was their own and not their parents' act.

CHURCH HISTORY NOT OUR AUTHORITY.

If we enter that district of mist and fog, ecclesiastical history, it should be with the distinct understanding that it is not in that direction that the sure path to truth can be found. The Bible is our sole and final guide. The teaching of the New Testament continually points out a coming and terrible widespread apostacy when grievous wolves should enter in and turn the sheepfold into a wild beasts' lair. In the closing sublime visions of the Book of Revelation, whatever may be its interpretation, this truth is unmistakably revealed—that for ages the church on earth would have to battle with fierce foes of varied forms. The canon closes with threats to any who would add to or take from the revelation of God. Evolution is not the law of the progress of the church, which is rather a constant conflict against evolution. If it could be proved that infant sprinkling was evolved in the second century our antagonism to it should be equally strong. Apostolic precedent and not ecclesiastical history

is our guide. Church history, in the strict sense of the term, cannot be written. It is the ambitious and un-Christlike men who gain the world's applause and write their names on its rolls of fame. The record of the humble and Christlike is on high. If from the close of the canon of Scripture to the present day not a single case of true baptism were on record, that would not discharge us from obedience to Christ. The true Baptist looks over all uninspired history and accepts no precedent but that of the apostolic churches.

THE DIDACHE.

The latest uplifting of the curtain and glimpse at the early church has been the discovery of an ancient MS. which is entitled "*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.*" Its date is generally supposed to be early in the second century, or even near the close of the first. It is known among students as "*The Didache.*" It contains a reference to baptism which is found in Chapter vii. as follows: "1. Now concerning Baptism. Baptize thus, having first taught all these things, baptize ye in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in living water. 2. And if thou hast not living water, baptize into other water; and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm. 3. But if thou hast neither, pour thrice upon the head in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But before baptism let the baptizer and the baptized fast, and any others who can; but thou shalt command the baptized to fast for one or two days before." Several things are noteworthy here. There is evidently the introduction of a human addition, that of fasting, for which there is no authority in the New Testament. But there is no mention of infants, and

the direction concerning fasting, and also that instruction was to precede, indicates that the administration to unconscious babes was unknown. The demand that the water should be living or running and cold, points to the Jewish ceremony. The mention of pouring is unique in extant church writings of that age. It is possibly an interpolation and certainly without authority. It should be noted that it is only for exceptional cases, and the pouring was to be repeated thrice, so approaching as nearly as practicable to the Jewish method of immersion.

A VISION OF THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS.

The vision of the Shepherd of Hermas is a well-known work of the second century. (Book I., vision 3.) The writer sees the church uprising as a temple. Some stones are built in, but some roll away. He has this explanation given to him: "The other stones which you saw cast to a distance from the tower and running along the road and rolled therefrom into desert places are those who have indeed believed, but in their state of doubt have left the true way, thinking they can find a better, but they are in error and are wretched when they enter upon desert paths. Those which fell into the fire and were burnt are those who have departed for ever from the living God, and into whose hearts it no longer enters to show repentance, owing to their desires and lusts and the wickedness they commit. But the others which fell near the waters, and could not roll into the waters, who are they? They are those who have heard the Word and wish to be baptized in the name of the Lord, and when the sanctity of truth occurs to their memory they retract and walk back after their wicked desires."



Chapter vii.

FIRST STEPS ASTRAY.

THE third century of the Christian era was a crucial period.

In it we find the first records of the sanction of the baptism of unconscious babes. Fidus of Africa wrote to Cyprian, who obtained a decree of a council of Carthage in its favor. The earliest recorded case of departure from immersion is that of Novatian, or Novatus, who when in peril of death, desiring baptism, water was poured upon him in bed. The conversion of Constantine led to the union of Church and State, and sowed the seeds of the bad and bitter crop of Romish evil. Narrative and remarks of Dean Stanley.

THE third century was a crucial period of the history of the church. Victorious in every direction she had risen rapidly into wealth and power. Cultured pagans, unwilling to surrender their philosophies for the simplicity of the gospel, sought to form a union of the two, and a strange progeny of error arose. The idea that the new birth is nothing more than a change of creed, leading to a change of character and conduct, has ever been acceptable to educated but unspiritual persons. Baptism denotes a change of creed or the adoption of creed, hence it was regarded as being regeneration, a new birth of mind, if not of heart. The church must have some line of demarcation, and, if worldly, will incline

to believe in regeneration by ceremony rather than the Holy Spirit of God. The one men can control, the other they cannot. Human energy can make converts by baptism, but is powerless to produce spiritual life. No hierarchy, however ambitious, can make the heavenly wind blow otherwise than where it listeth. Man cannot control the operations of the Spirit. But he can turn the baptismal water into palaces and the homes of the mighty and rich. If men could not regenerate a prince they might yet baptize him, if he could be made willing, whether regenerate or not.

THE BAPTISM OF LITTLE CHILDREN.

The baptism of children was much discussed in the early church, as indeed it has been in every age. For it is not easy to decide when the public seal should be affixed to youthful discipleship. But that is a totally different question from that of the baptism of unconscious babes to meet the superstitious feelings of parents. Some of the references in the writings of the Fathers to infant baptism evidently refer to the administration of the rite to the little ones on a profession of faith and the perplexity of ascertaining at how youthful an age this may be trusted. The first clearly recorded instance of children being admitted to baptism, when too young to apprehend its meaning, occurred in a church in Africa, one of the least enlightened parts of the world. The date was about the middle of the third century. Fidus, a bishop, or as we should say, a pastor, had application from parents who desired baptism for their children as soon as they were born. It was a novel request, and he was perplexed. He wrote to Cyprian upon the subject,

for help to resolve his doubts, for the proposal did not meet his approval. It was discussed at a council at Carthage, A.D. 252-257, and a decision was arrived at in favor of baptizing children as early as desired by their parents. Cyprian wrote to Fidus:—"We could not agree to your opinion. On the contrary, we all judge that the mercy and grace of God is not to be refused to any human being as soon as he is born. God has no respect of age for the attainment of heavenly grace." He says further:—"If even the chief of sinners receives forgiveness on coming to the faith, and no one is precluded from baptism and from grace, how much less should infants be kept back? It surely more easily obtains remission of sins when it is not its own sin, but that of another which needs forgiveness." What should be noted here is that this was evidently a new question. It grew out of the development of the serious error, so antagonistic to evangelical religion, of baptismal regeneration. It is certainly curious that the justification given by Cyprian is precisely the contrary to that advanced in modern times. Infant baptism, at first, was thought to wash away original sin; now it is to express a belief that infants are in the Kingdom of God when first born. It needed a synodical settlement, which was given by sixty-six bishops, to meet the scruples of Pastor Fidus.

NOVATIAN'S CHRISTENING.

The first recorded instance of a departure from immersion is the case of Novatian. It occurred about the middle of the third century. Novatian had been attacked by a serious illness, and because he was in danger of death he desired baptism. His friends, in haste, as they

could not in his dangerous condition immerse him without great risk, poured water round his body as he lay in his bed, so making as near an approach to the correct form as they could. It appears that there was a kind of dramatic immersion; they got water about the sick man somehow. He recovered, and it reveals the prevalent opinion that a very warm dispute ensued as to the validity of Novatian's baptism. But he was a strong man, and fought vigorously for the recognition of what had been done. He subsequently became the leader of a new sect, which sought to make church discipline severer than was practised in that age, and, strange to say, demanded that the adherent should be immersed again on joining the community. Novatians were called Puritans and Anabaptists.

CONSTANTINE.

In the year A.D. 312, there happened what may be considered the greatest calamity the church of Jesus Christ has ever known. It is the glory of the apostacy, but the lamentation of the true disciple. The Emperor Constantine was seeking the throne of the Cæsars. On the eve of a decisive battle he is reported to have had a vision of a large cross in the sky, bearing the inscription, "By this conquer." In all probability it was some natural phenomenon. He took it, Roman like, for a good omen. The inspiration it brought was not from heaven. He gained a decisive victory, not indeed by the cross of Christ, but by the cross of the sword handle. This brought Christianity into union with the State and the degradation was rapid. Constantine was the child of a pious mother. Eusebius calls him the son of a pious

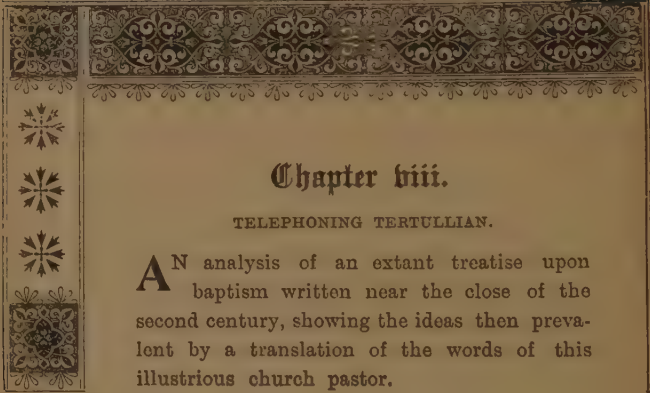
father. But assuredly he had not been taken to any font when an infant. In his declining days he sought baptism and it was ministered to him by Eusebius, in the 64th year of his age, about a month before his death. In his baptism he laid aside his purple robes, probably knowing how far removed his career as an emperor was from the course of a Christian, and changed them for the white garment of the newly baptized, which he wore until his death. Romanists regard this so-called vision as a work of the finger of God. Protestants have too often spoken of it with admiration. It is true it stayed pagan persecution; but it became the beginning of the great curse of the church, in which she loosed her hold on divine, and leaned on human force, mistaking the sword of the warrior for the sword of the Spirit. It was the confusing of the dagger of hate for the cross of love. It was indeed a sad hour when that which was the emblem of human sacrifice and shame became the symbol of worldly glory. From that time the great and growing ecclesiastical association ceased to be the Church of Christ, except in name, and degenerated into the Church of Rome, which is a gigantic organization, aiming at universal dominion. She has a similar object to that of Babylon the great world power of antiquity, of which she was the lineal descendant, and soon became the representative. The pope is not the successor of Christ, but of Nebuchadnezzar and the Cæsars, seeking universal empire in the more subtle form of the Romish hierarchy, perverting every ordinance of Christ, and not the least, His great command to be baptized.

DEAN STANLEY'S NARRATIVE.

The late Dean of Westminster, the erudite Dr. Stanley,

in his "Christian Institutes," draws a very vivid picture of a baptismal scene of about the fifth century. He says:—"Let us conceive ourselves present at one of those extraordinary scenes. There was but one hour for the ceremony; it was midnight. The torches flared through the dark hall as the troops of converts flocked in. The baptistery consisted of an inner and an outer chamber. In the outer chamber stood the candidates for baptism, stripped to their shirts; and turning to the west as the region of sunset, they stretched forth their hands through the dimly lit chamber as in a defiant attitude toward the evil spirit of darkness, and speaking to him by name, said:—'I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy works, and all thy pomp, and all thy service.' Then they turned like a regiment, facing right around to the east, and repeated in a form, more or less long, the belief in the Father, the Son and the Spirit, which has grown up into the so-called Apostle's Creed of the West, and the so-called Nicene Creed of the East. They then advanced into the inner chamber. Before them yawned the deep pool or reservoir, and standing by the deacon or deaconess, as the case might be, that all should be done with decency. The whole troop undressed completely, as if for a bath, and stood up naked before the bishop, who put to each the questions, to which the answer was returned in a loud and distinct voice, as of those who knew what they had undertaken. They then plunged into the water. Both before and after the immersion their bare limbs were rubbed with oil from head to foot; then they were clothed in white gowns, and received, as token of the kindly feeling of their new brotherhood, the kiss of peace and a taste of honey and milk; and they expressed their new

faith by using for the first time the Lord's prayer." This indicates that degradation had set in, in another direction. The simple, beautiful and expressive ordinance of Christ was changed into a gaudy ceremonial, suggestive of the mysterious rites of heathenism. Dean Stanley notices "With few exceptions the whole of the Western churches have now substituted for the ancient bath the ceremony of letting fall a few drops of water on the face. Not by decree of Council or Parliament, but by the general sentiment of Christian liberty, this remarkable change was effected. Beginning in the thirteenth century, it has gradually driven the ancient catholic usage out of the whole of Europe. There is no one who would now wish to go back to the old practice. It followed no doubt the example of the apostles and their Master. It had the sanction of the venerable churches of the earlier ages and of the sacred countries of the East. Baptism by sprinkling was rejected by the whole ancient church (except in the rare case of deathbeds and extreme necessity), as no baptism at all." All this is most true, except the statement that "no one would now wish to go back to the old practice." There are still the members of the Baptist Denomination, who believe, whatever "the general sentiment of Christian liberty," that it is best to follow "the example of the apostles and their Master."

Chapter viii.

TELEPHONING TERTULLIAN.

AN analysis of an extant treatise upon baptism written near the close of the second century, showing the ideas then prevalent by a translation of the words of this illustrious church pastor.



WERE it possible to invent a telephone by means of which we could converse with the distant past, as we can now with the distant present, it would indeed be a wonderful instrument. A conversation on baptism with someone of the third century of the Christian era would be indeed interesting. But would it convince the unconvincible? An old book is a telephone for the far away in time. We open one with the title "*Tertullian de Baptismo.*" It was written about the close of the second century. Who Quintilla of Carthage was, who lived about A.D. 200, we cannot tell. Whether she was a holy Christian lady, with views like those of

the Quakers, and feeling herself called to protest against the errors of her time; or, whether she was a mischievous busybody going about unsettling good people, cannot now be ascertained. But she appears to have on some occasion spoken slightly of baptism, asserting that salvation was by faith alone. This came to the ears of the pastor of the Christian church there, whose name was Tertullian, whom Jerome describes as a man of vehement and eager character. He was a brilliant writer and appears to have been greatly moved by what Quintilla said. We can never fully know the power of words. Tertullian, a Baptist minister, if we apply modern terms to men of old, went to work and wrote a treatise on baptism, by which his words reach our ears to-day.

IDEA OF BAPTISM.

We will use this ancient treatise, in its crooked Latin, as a time telephone. First, we ask this reverend gentleman,

“What is your idea of baptism?”

He replies, “It is a blessed sacrament of water, by which, when washed, we are cleansed from the sins of our pristine blindness unto eternal life.”

“But is not that very wonderful, dear sir?”

He continues, “There is nothing more hardens the minds of men than the simplicity of divine works regarded in act, and the magnificence of the promised effect. As here with so much simplicity, without pomp, without any novel apparatus, and even without assumption, being plunged into water and tinged with a few words, and rising again not much, if any cleaner, it seems incredible, the consequence should have been eternal.”

As we listen he follows with a curious statement, which must be judged from the speech customs of his age rather than ours, but nevertheless shows us his practice in baptism was to immerse. He is evidently annoyed with the lady, whether a member of his church or one of the Cainites he does not say, but she cannot hold with baptismal regeneration. He says:—

“A viper has made it her chief aim to destroy baptism. Quite natural. Vipers, asps, and such like snakes seek dry and waterless places. But we, who are like fishes, after the example of our Ichthus, Jesus Christ, are born in water and neither otherwise than by continuing in water are we safe.”

“But, reverend sir, we want to know your mode of baptism.”

He says: “A man is dipped in water, and dyed by the utterance of a few words, and then rises again.”

He then gives a eulogy of water, telling how the beginning of all order was when “The Spirit of God moved upon the water,” evidently ignorant of modern criticism, which rejects the inspiration of the Book of Genesis.

“But have you no sprinkling?”

“The pagans,” he replies, “by carrying water about and sprinkling everywhere, purify houses and temples and whole cities.” He regards it as heathen practice, and gives not the slightest suggestion that it was ever used in baptism.

Again he says, “When we come out from the pool we are anointed.” “Bodily we are plunged in water, spiritually we are freed from sin.” Tertullian evidently knew

nothing of pouring or sprinkling. But he is strong on baptismal regeneration.

We venture to ask him for a clear statement. He replies with emphasis: "No one without baptism can attain salvation." He proceeds to a consideration whether the apostles were baptized, indicating that there were those who challenged the notion. "I have heard," says he, "the Lord is my witness, doubts of that nature." This indicates that Tertullian's statements in favor of baptismal regeneration were not the universal belief of his age.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS.

Now, in endeavoring to understand the ancient view, or rather statement, of "the necessity of baptism to salvation," there are one or two considerations which ought not to be overlooked.

First of all, the utterances of that age were marked by an exaggeration of metaphor, common then, which if taken literally now would convey a false impression.

Secondly, in an age of persecution, when to be baptized was a penal offence punished often by torture and a cruel death, it was needful to give very strong emphasis to the importance of confessing Christ in His appointed way, and that the duty should be vigorously enforced.

Thirdly, the idea of baptism must be brought into consideration. It was by the Fathers in many respects rightly considered as, so to speak, bringing to a focus the things which accompany salvation; it was one supreme act of repentance for the past, of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the pledge of a new and holy life. It was the answer of a good conscience toward God in

all things pertaining to life and Godliness. It was not the mere rite, but the attitude taken and professed by the soul in that rite, that was at the root of many of the extreme remarks found in early church writers on the subject.

BAPTISM A SEAL.

Let us question him still further on this, for there is apparent confusion. We learn that in one of his treatises he said :—

“Baptism is of no purpose if we have not repented of our sins and amended them. It is a great presumption to imagine that having led a disorderly course of life till the very day of baptism we should be made holy all of a sudden.”

“Tell us plainly, friend Tertullian, what you really consider baptism to be ?”

He replies, “It is a sealing as it were a garment of faith which formerly was naked, and which had no efficacy without the special command. Then the law of bathing (dyeing with a colour) was given by a prescribed form.”

We can make no objection to baptism as the sealing of a document, or the garment of a creed, or the dyeing of a robe, “the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” But the inward grace must be there first, the deed before the seal, the living person before the robe.

SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

“Now we approach a very important point. Will you kindly tell us whether you baptize young children, and if so, why ?”

We hear this reply ; “Baptism is not to be rashly

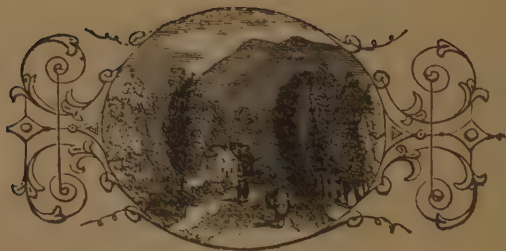
administered." He notes that if Philip readily baptized the eunuch it was upon conspicuous evidence that the Lord considered him worthy. Paul was speedily baptized, for he was speedily recognized to be a chosen vessel. He says: "God's approbation sends sure premonitory tokens before it, every petition of man may both deceive and be deceived. And so according to the circumstance and disposition, and even age, of each individual the delay of baptism is preferable, principally however in the case of little children." "Why is it necessary?" he asks, "to thrust sponsors into peril who themselves, by death, may fail in their promises or be disappointed by a bad disposition. The Lord does indeed say, 'Forbid them not to come to me.' Let them come, then, when they are grown. Let them come when they are taught were to come, let them become Christians when they are able to know Christ. Why does the innocent age hasten to the remission of sin?"

This sound advice is directly opposed to the baptism of unconscious babes. But Tertullian goes further and says that unmarried persons must have their baptism deferred. He concludes the discussion with this sentence: "If any understand the weighty import of baptism they will fear its reception more than its delay. *Sound faith is secure of salvation.*"

PRAISE OF WATER.

But before the interview closes, we listen to the following fanciful passage relating to water:—"How great the favor of water with God and His Christ, which is for the confirmation of baptism! Never is Christ without water; even by water He was tinged (baptized).

The commencement of His power, when called to the marriage, with water He consecrates. When He preaches He invites to His eternal water those who are athirst. When He teaches of love, the gift of a cup of water to a brother He commends among the works of kindness. By a well He recruits His strength. Upon the water He marches freely, He passes over the sea. He ministers water to those whom He taught. He perseveres in testimony of baptism even to His passion. When given to the Cross there is water; witness the hands of Pilate, and when wounded water bursts from His side."





Chapter ix.

THE GREAT APOSTACY.

AFTER the baptism of Constantine, the Church became allied to the State. Rome revived the old spirit of arrogating universal empire, and her bishops demanded supremacy. The baptisteries of Italy indicate that immersion was the mode. The Council of Trent in the sixteenth century gave authoritative statement of the doctrine of the papacy.



DURING the earlier centuries of the Christian era, there is abounding evidence that the apostolic form of baptism was all but universal, but the apostolic idea gradually became altered, not without repeated protests and separations. Baptism and regeneration became confounded; the seal was mistaken for the deed. By its alliance with the State, the church provided a new field for the aspirations of ambitious men. The ancient arrogance of Rome revived and flowed in new channels. As the successor of Babylon, the church of that city sought universal dominion, and aimed at its attainment by ecclesiastical forces, and by her wealth and powerful bishops, arrogated an authority over other churches.

Against such an evil the maintenance of the belief that Christianity is individual and spiritual, as expressed by the true administration of baptism, would have been a perpetual protest. The silent voice of the ordinance had to be counteracted. Baptism as a profession, free and intelligent, was changed into baptism as a caption, compulsory and unintelligent. A new conception of the church arose. It was regarded as the company of the baptized. And for more than a thousand years that idea ruled in the civilized world. A true baptism, one which demands repentance and faith, and spiritual life, is not suited to a State church, which needs an initiatory rite of a compulsory nature, a visible sign, not of individual grace, but of subjection. The rulers of this world must have some other test than the evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. With them a Christian is one who has passed through an initiatory rite.

ROME SUPREME.

During the long supremacy of the Roman hierarchy in Europe, the following appears to have been the practice with regard to baptism.

1. It was generally by trine immersion, though not universally; some branches of the church kept to single immersion, as in Spain and in Brittany; in case of sickness aspersion was permitted, but it was ever considered a very inferior observance.

2. It was administered to infants within a few days of their birth.

3. Many pompous and foolish ceremonies, mostly of pagan origin, were added to the simple appointment.

4. It was held to be regeneration, and necessary for salvation, one priest going so far as to assert that doubtless the penitent thief on the cross had been baptized.

5. The formula, as given in Matthew xxvii. 19, was always considered essential.

To call into question the authority of the Church on any one of these points was penal, and instantly dealt with by the strong arm of the State. Here and there amid the darkness we see a star arise, but almost immediately it sets in blood. For example, at Orleans, in the year A.D. 1022, ten priests, canons of the church, were discovered to have embraced the belief, among other things, that there is no washing away of sin by baptism. The King and Queen and the bishops made enquiry. They engaged spies, who won the confidence of these good men, whose piety and learning were considerable and unquestioned. They were persecuted with barbaric cruelty and publicly burned at the stake. The queen herself expressed her detestation of their conduct by selecting one who had been her own spiritual director and knocking out his eye. Several other persons of standing in society who had expressed sympathy suffered with them. For Romanism shows no mercy in stamping out quickly what she considers heresy.

BAPTISTERIES.

An interesting and instructive monument of past belief and practice is found in the baptisteries of Italy, more than sixty of which may be seen at the present time. They were all built for immersion. Baptistery was the name given to the plunging room of the ancient Roman baths. They are generally octagon in form, eight being

the signature of baptism (See I. Peter iii. 20); it was proper to have seven steps down to the bottom, or rather up from it, to represent the seven graces of the Spirit. These baptisteries were distinct from the regular places of worship, but subsequently, with the disuse of immersion, they were converted into churches, and are now so used. In the older ones the pools were large. In the baptistery of Constantine the basin or colymbethra was three feet deep and twenty-five feet across, it was of porphyry, and at one time entirely lined with silver; the whole erection, with suitable dressing rooms, was in a magnificent style; on the edge of the font were seven harts of solid silver, the hart being the emblem of the candidate (Psalm xlii. 1). There was a lamb of massive gold through which the water poured in, and that was not without symbolical meaning. The date of the erection was the fifth century. Baptisteries of a later date, but similar in plan, are found. There is one of great magnificence at Florence, with a gallery all around for spectators. The font, which was originally a fine octagonal basin, with a diameter of twelve feet, was restored in A.D. 1371, and made four and a half feet in depth. It would hold at the same time no less than twelve persons. There were recesses at alternate angles for the administering priests. The poet Dante refers to this in his great poem, "The Inferno," and states that he once rescued a person from drowning who had fallen into the water, but under what circumstances is not known. It was destroyed in A.D. 1576. In these baptisteries sometimes a large number of adults were immersed at the same service. There were baptisteries in other countries, which have been either destroyed or

transformed into churches. There is a part of Canterbury Cathedral called the baptistery which was once used for the purpose; it is octagonal and united with the main building by a corridor. The cathedral at York is said to have been built on the place where was formerly a pool or fountain, in which Paulinus baptized King Edwin, A.D. 627. When heathenism passed away and parish churches were erected, it became the custom to place in them large stone fonts or basins, not sufficient for the baptism of adults, but for the immersion of infants, some of which, of considerable antiquity, are extant now, of a size which would be preposterous if only intended for sprinkling. There is one large enough for immersion still to be seen at St. Brecon's Bed, of the workmanship of the sixth century.

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

The first meeting of the great Council of Trent was held in 1545. It was to give, amid the questioning of an awakened Europe, some authoritative decisions upon the doctrine of the Roman church. By that time the modern degeneracy of baptism was not complete. The canons and decretals of that assembly assert that it is necessary to salvation, hence infants are to be baptized. The ceremony is declared to imprint an indelible character on the soul. The canons on baptism say nothing about either pouring or sprinkling, but the catechism of the Council of Trent asserts that by the common practice of the church there are three modes of administration: immersion, pouring and sprinkling. The third canon pronounces a curse upon anyone who shall say that in the Roman church there is not the true doctrine of the

sacrament of baptism. And the thirteenth canon asserts that "If anyone shall say that children who have been baptized in infancy ought, when they come to years of discretion, to be re-baptized, upon their own faith, let him be anathema." Which decree indicates that some suspicion of the validity of infant baptism was entertained in those days. The modern heresy of dedication, as the great idea of baptism, appears to have been unknown. The one reason for the administration to infants was the belief that the regeneration of the soul was secured by the contact of water "tinged with sacred words." As the second canon states:—"If anyone shall say that true and natural water is not necessary in baptism, and so overturns, as a metaphor, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,' let him be accursed." The Council of Trent is actually the definition of a metamorphosis which had been going on for centuries, changing the discipleship of Jesus Christ into that of a Roman hierarchy, the doctrines of the New Testament for those of semi-pagan theologians, and the observances of the apostles of Christ for those of the priests of the Vatican. Every doctrine and every practice became degenerate. Instead of the Bride of Christ came the Harlot of Babylon. Then, neither too soon nor too complete, came the Reformation.



Chapter x.

SOME SIDE LIGHTS.

THE practice of the Greek Church. In modern Greece. The symbol of the fish. Ancient Pictures. Stories by Prynne. The Catacombs at Rome.

DURING the dominance of Rome, the baptism, not the sprinkling, of children of Christian parents, became general. Even the sanction of the Council of Ravenna in A.D. 1311 for the adoption of aspersion did not bring it into universal use. Tertullian in the church's early days had said "Let the children become Christians when they know Christ." Had the church kept this counsel, her witness and power would have been immeasurably greater. The one great injury to the Gospel has been the inconsistency of its professors. Infant baptism develops this evil by creating a host of professors who are destitute of any signs of the grace of God.

THE GREEK CHURCH.

The great Apostacy soon failed in its endeavor to establish an universal church. Besides an incalculable number of heresies within its own communion, and splits

which severed from its pale, it soon separated into two great divisions; the Roman or Catholic or Western Church, and the Greek or Orthodox or Eastern Church. The fissure was gradual, but was complete in the ninth century. There uprose a vigorous struggle for supremacy between the prelate of Constantinople and the prelate of Rome. The avowed cause was the introduction into the creed by the Roman Church of the words "and the Son" in relation to the proceeding of the Holy Ghost. It was a subtle theological question and possibly not the real root of the variance. One point of difference is that in the Western Church the Latin language is used for the liturgy and in the Eastern the Greek. Now in Greek the word "baptizo" means to immerse. Among a people who understood that language the command is unmistakable. It is, Believe and be dipped. The phrase "baptism by sprinkling" appears, as a writer of that church expressed it, "an absurd contradiction." We might as well talk of singing by tasting. Hence there was maintained in the Eastern Church a rigid adherence to the primitive form. According to its theologians Western baptism is not valid. In 1750 on some Roman Catholics wishing to join the Eastern Church, the Patriarch Cyril decided synodically that they must previously be baptized. The Archbishop of Xanthe, only a few years since, is reported to have asserted that the Pope of Rome was neither more nor less than an unbaptized layman, for no conference of orders can be valid if made before baptism. Steps taken by other churches towards reunion have always been met with this assertion: "But you have not been baptized." When in 1894 the Papal encyclical desiring the union of Christendom was issued,

the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of Constantinople felt impelled to send out a reply. They asserted that all union with the Latin church was impossible until the Bishop of Rome "shall shake off once and for all the chain of the many and various innovations introduced and contrary to the Gospel." Foremost among these is noted "Sprinkling instead of Baptism." And the Greek church concludes its reply with the just declaration: "It is better to have a praiseworthy war than a peace which separates us from God."

IN MODERN GREECE.

In a recently published work on travel in Greece, Dr. J. P. Mahaffy describes thus a common scene in a country where the Greek tongue is spoken. "Turning round a corner, you stumble upon a priest, followed by two acolytes carrying on a cross stick between them a copper cauldron of water, with the Byzantine cross on the handle. It is the pappas returning from a baptism. The Orthodox church still baptizes by immersion. For this purpose infants are still carried to the neighboring church. In case they are delicate, or in case their parents can pay a sufficient fee, the pappas go to the house, mumble some prayers among the assembled household, and seizing the infant by the arms plunge it three times into the cauldron. Though this treatment is sometimes fatal to life, the orthodoxy of the people and their clergy will not tolerate any modification of the ritual of the sacrament." The observance is similar throughout the cold districts of Russia. It is a brutal thing to expose a delicate new-born infant to being plunged by some awkward, heartless priest three times in water, and

evidently out of harmony with the spirit of the Gospel. But the people know that the command is to dip ; the danger is in applying it when it was never intended, and, where perhaps the chief peril is, in the threefold immersion.

THE VESICA AND FISH.

In ecclesiastical ornamentation, and upon tombs is often found to this day, the Vesica. It is a panel oval-shaped, with curved sides and pointed at both top and bottom. It is supposed to represent a fish. In ancient Christian symbol the fish represented Jesus Christ, and also His disciples. A writer of the fourth century notices this and explains that the Greek word for fish gives initials for the title "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour. J. Ch. Th. U. S." Much older than that, Tertullian wrote : We the *pisciculi* (the little fishes) like our Fish, Jesus Christ, were born in the water." On some ancient baptisteries may be seen the representation of three fishes intertwined in the form of a triangle, symbol of the idea of baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity. In olden times the baptistery was called the Piscina or fish-pool ; that term, however, was afterwards employed to denote the basin in a church on the south side of the altar. The emblem of a fish is very frequent in the Catacombs of Rome and throws an interesting side light on the question.

ANCIENT PICTURES.

Incidental evidence of some value may be found in the early pictures of baptism. Several of an ancient date are still extant. In every one the administration is evidently by immersion. The conventional representation of our

Lord's attention to the rite is curious. The Saviour stands in the middle of a stream; He is nearly nude. On one side is John the Baptist, on the other two or three angels holding clothes; later on these were regarded as symbolizing the three graces; the heavens are opening and a hand, or a dove, descends; sometimes there are witnesses, sometimes not; there is generally a little tree with an axe at the root, and sometimes a hart. (Psalm xlii. 1). In some pictures the baptism is commencing, in some it is over and the Saviour is rising, dripping with water. In later representations the immersion is past and the Baptist is anointing, pouring from a shell. This by many has been thought to represent baptism by pouring, which cannot, however, be the intention, as the candidate stands up to his middle in the stream. In a picture of St. Sylvester baptizing, the convert stands in the font with the water up to his neck, the saint's hand is on his head, another convert is either dressing or undressing. Many of the fathers assert the importance of oil anointing immediately after baptism. A practice has of recent years been adopted by some Anglican clergymen of christening infants by pouring water from a shell upon the face. Shells suited for the purpose are sold at ecclesiastical depôts in London. This innovation has arisen from a mistaken idea of ancient pictures. It confuses the subsequent anointing with the baptism. It is curious in a church which professes to study antiquity.

IN THE HARLEIAN LIBRARY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Among the valuable manuscripts No. 1527 is considered curious and about five centuries old. It gives a series of pictures illustrating the New Testament, painted in

vivid colors and gilded in the highest style of art known about the thirteenth century; and hence valuable for illustrating the religious ideas of the age. The drawing is spirited. A short explanation in mediæval Latin is given of each. In nearly all cases baptism is represented by the candidate standing in a font. The font is a large bowl on a pedestal, some three or four feet from the ground and capable of holding several persons. In one place there are seven adults in one at the same time yet it is not drawn larger in that picture than in others. In another, in illustration of the text "God loved the church and gave himself for it that he might purify it by the washing of regeneration," &c., the church is represented by six persons standing in a kind of butt or tub, staves and hoops complete. The baptism of John is thus given; the water is drawn like a hillock, a very common mode of representation, the candidates are all standing up to their loins in the water, John is on one side of the river and a number of spectators on the other. The next picture is the conventional one of the Baptism of our Lord; He stands up to His waist in the stream, the Baptist on one side and the angels holding clothes on the other. In the next picture He is seen seated in a font. John has a small box in his hand, and he has taken something out and is placing it on the Saviour's head, indicating the subsequent anointing. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the lad is baptized on his return, and, curiously, he is drawn very small, to denote moral littleness; the inscription teaches us "The best robe signifies baptism, the ring faith, the shoes good doctrine, and the killing of the calf signifies that the Father gave up His Heavenly Son to death for the redemption of the

human race." In one representation three persons are in the font and three little imps are flying away from them as fast as they can. There are thirty-seven pictures of baptism and all by immersion. Queer as the painter's ideas were, he never considered that sprinkling, or even pouring, was the way in which the rite was administered in New Testament times.

WILLIAM PRYNNE.

In the seventeenth century there lived a very remarkable champion of the Puritan party of the name of William Prynne. In 1632 he wrote a vigorous book against the evils of the theatre, for which he was prosecuted at the Star Chamber, had his ears cut off, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment in the Tower. In this work he tells the following stories which he collected from Nicholas Cabasila :—"It is recorded of one Porphyry, a pagan stage player, that he grew to such a height of impiety that he adventured to baptize himself in jest upon the stage, on purpose to make the people laugh at Christian baptism, and so bring both it and Christianity into contempt ; and for this purpose he plunged into a vessel of water which he had placed upon the stage, calling aloud upon the Trinity, at which the spectators fell into great laughter. But lo ! the goodness of God to this profane miscreant ! It pleased God to show such a demonstration of His power and grace upon him, that this sportive baptism of his became a serious regeneration to him, insomuch that instead of a graceless player he became a gracious Christian ; and not long after a constant martyr. The like I find registered of one Ardalion, another actor, who in derision of the Holy

sacrament of baptism, baptized himself in jest upon the stage, and by that means became a Christian, God's mercy turning this his wickedness to his eternal good." Mr. Prynne asserts that he does not believe in these stories. But it is not absolutely impossible for them to be true. We can all understand how such a wicked act might bring a man to serious thought and penitence, and so be the agency for his conversion. God moves in a mysterious way, especially in His works of grace. But what should be especially noted here is that in those days baptism was by immersion, and was considered a very solemn ordinance of God.

THE CATACOMBS OF ROME.

The monuments of Christians of the early days of Christianity found in the catacombs at Rome are full of profound interest and throw much light on the thought of those times. They do not contain a single reference to infant baptism. There are many inscriptions referring to the loss of young children and speaking of their piety. In a few cases they are called Neophytes, which means "young plants," but certainly does not connote baptism; indeed the evidence is not certain that these are Christian inscriptions at all. There is no proof that the word neophyte was in use in the church in that age. But the evidence in favor of immersion is considerable. In the Lucina catacomb there is a representation of the baptism of our Lord, probably of the fourth or fifth century; the Saviour is represented as being in the water up to His waist, or perhaps neck, and John is assisting Him. In Callixtus catacomb a nude youth is standing in the water, which is dripping from every part of his body. In the



BAPTISTRY IN CATACOMB OF PONZIANO, ROME.

catacomb of Ponzianus there is a fresco, of the eighth century, with the conventional representation of our Lord's example. He stands up to his middle in the water, on one side of the river an angel holds his coat, and on the other is John the Baptist, placing his hand on the Saviour's head, as though bowing him down for immersion; above is the dove, by the side is the hart. This picture is on the wall of a baptistery, which is supposed to have been in use in the second century. The pool is four feet in length, three and a half in width, and three and a half in depth. It is to this day filled with water running through it from a spring, and could be used for baptism. It is a silent but eloquent witness of the practice of the early age of the church.



Chapter xi.

BAPTISM IN GREAT BRITAIN.

THE *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* speaks of an introduction of baptism into England in A.D. 596. But there was Christianity, and there were baptisms at a much earlier period. The pre-Augustine churches and bishops resembled modern Baptist churches and pastors. The story told of the battle of Hallelujah in Bangor y Coed. Rome was supreme from about the 8th to the 15th centuries, during which time trine immersion was the practice. The first authoritative departure was in the Prayer Book of 1549. At the Westminster Confession the mention of dipping was lost by one vote.

THE *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year A.D. 606 gives the following record. "This year Pope Gregory died, about ten years after he had sent us baptism." That indicates some introduction of baptism into England in the year 596, which is the date of Augustine's mission, to which the allusion was made. Christianity long before this date had spread throughout Great Britain and Ireland. Nearly two centuries earlier Patrick, the child of a deacon of a church, was baptized in a fountain and is said to have baptized twelve thousand converts.

MISSION OF AUGUSTINE.

The visit of Augustine to England and his formation of

a see at Canterbury, which historians used to call the conversion of England, was not to introduce Christianity but Romanism. Pope Gregory's answer to the eighth question of Augustine, when asking for instruction as to his mission, was "to baptize a child in the very hour it is born is in no way prohibited." No mention is found of infant baptism in the country prior to Augustine's visit but several that occurred soon after. From these and some other considerations the highly probable conclusion has been arrived at that we are indebted to Augustine for the introduction of the perversion of the ordinance. With this view agrees the subsequent narrative of Augustine's conference with what Bede, with his Romeward tendencies, calls "the monastery of Bangor," but which in modern phraseology was "a baptized church" with about two thousand members, of which the learned Dinooth was the pastor, and was situated not in Carnarvonshire but in Flintshire. It was a great centre of biblical instruction. We must beware of terminology in studying church history. Augustine demanded among other things "You shall duly administer baptism by which we are born again to God according to the custom of the holy Roman Apostolic Church." The chronicler Fabyan says the words were: "That ye give Christianity to the children." This the good men declined, so that it was evidently some innovation. They had the old Baptist spirit of independence. The result was that the Romish emissary, failing to convince them, cursed them, threatening them with the vengeance of death. "And so," Bede relates, "just as he said, exactly, the Divine judgment came." Shortly after about half their number were cruelly massacred, from which atrocity the hands of

Augustine were not clean. His mission was by the appointment of Pope Gregory, called the Great, who has the reputation of caring for little children, and issuing a decree that they should be baptized. The story of the origin of the mission of Augustine is now called into question, though why it is difficult to say. It comes on the authority of Bede and is too good to be wholly forgotten. Gregory had noticed some beautiful English children for sale as slaves in the market place at Rome. Asking who they were, the reply was that they were called "Angles." "Good," said he, "for they have an angelic face, and it is right that such should be co-heirs with the angels in heaven. What is the name of the province whence they came?" The reply was "Deiri." "Good," said he, "withdrawn from the 'ire' and called to the mercy of Christ." "The king of that province how is he called?" The reply was "Ella." He, alluding to the name, said: "Alleluia. The praises of God the Creator must be sung in those parts." Now the monk of Jarrow shows no signs of humor in his writings; it is not at all the kind of story he would have invented, which would in all probability have been one of a miracle rather than a joke. To say the least, it was current in that age. It was a very pretty beginning of a very mischievous business. But, evidently, the English people did not take readily to infant baptism, for before the century had passed, in A.D. 690, King Ina, a bigoted adherent of Rome, made a law imposing a heavy fine on any parent who neglected the baptism of his children.

PRE-AUGUSTINE CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity was introduced very early into Britain, in

all probability in apostolic days. It came from the Greek churches, via Marseilles, by the traders in tin and other British metals. This may account for the scanty records, for prior to Augustine, the British Christians were distinctly anti-Roman, and Rome's historians could seldom see any good outside their church. Tertullian wrote of "British districts, places inaccessible to the Romans, but subject to Christ." And Bede gives the British churches the character of "having preserved the faith which they had received whole and uncorrupted." The churches were independent and self-governing. They sustained large schools for biblical learning. Holy Scripture was diligently studied and was the supreme rule of faith. Chrysostom says: "In Britain men may be heard discussing points in Scripture with different voices, but not with different beliefs; with varying tongues, but not with varying faith." Amongst the prominent pastors were men of the purest faith and holiest life. Such men as Ninias, Palladius, and Kentigern, Cædmon, and Aidan, Patrick, and Columba, were noble ministers of Jesus Christ, and form a contrast to Augustine and his fellow-emissaries from Rome. In the outburst of Arianism, in the fourth century, the British Christians were pronounced to be pure from "all contagion of the detestable heresy." The places of worship were plain, built of timber and wattles. Baptism was certainly by immersion, and there is no evidence that unconscious babes were subjected to it. What form of worship was used cannot now be ascertained, although there is some ground for believing that exposition of Scripture was the chief feature. Hymns were sung. Gildas speaks of "Church Melodies," "The praise of Christ,

sweetly sung by the musical voices of young people." The Eucharist was administered with both bread and wine. Difficult religious questions were settled at what ecclesiastical writers call Synods, but were similar to our Association or Union gatherings. One was held at Brevy, in Wales, at which one hundred and eighteen bishops assembled, a fact which is a great trouble to modern Episcopalians, as it indicates that a bishop in those days was what we should now term a minister. Patrick set apart upward of four hundred bishops, having been at the formation of that number at churches. No doubt the dress, customs, and languages all differed from those of our own times. Putting aside terms, and getting at realities, it will be found that the churches of those early days were more like Baptist churches than any other of the present day; that their ministers were more like Baptist missionaries or pastors, than diocesan bishops either of England or Rome; and that the work and worship of these churches were more like the work and worship of the Baptists, than the splendid ceremonial of the Established Church of England and Wales now, which claims to be the same ecclesiastical system. Every glimpse we can gain, apart from the distortion of Romish historians, brings the conviction that could one of these ancient so-called monks or bishops rise again he would be at home in a humble Baptist chapel, and utterly lost in an Anglican church. A beautiful story of these olden days has been preserved.

THE BATTLE OF HALLELUJAH.

In the year A.D. 429 the land was invaded by a formidable army of wild Picts from the north. Bede gives

a vivid narrative. One of the pastors, Germanus, had been a soldier, and the alarmed people implored his assistance to direct the army. He was appointed general of the forces, and many flocked to his standard. He was a great preacher and a man of ardent piety. "The people were instructed by daily sermons," says the historian, but makes no mention of any liturgical worship. As the troops marched against the enemy, Germanus preached, and there was a glorious revival. The men asked for baptism. Now this teaches several things. These men had not been baptized in their infancy. It was recognized that baptism was to follow conversion. Bede relates the curious fact that the men advanced wet with the baptismal water, an evidence that it was administered by immersion. The word is *madidus*, saturated, wringing wet. Rarely has there been such a battle. It took place near Mold in Flintshire, Wales. As the British troops advanced, the pastors, Germanus and Lupus, shouted Hallelujah. The whole body of the soldiers took up the cry. A panic seized upon the foes. In real alarm they threw down their weapons and fled. The British lost not a single man, and were delivered from the terrible invasion.

ROME SUPREME.

For a while there was a fierce struggle between the aggressive Romanism and the old faith. It commenced in Kent, and gradually advanced north and west until the "New Church of the English," as Pope Gregory not improperly termed it, prevailed throughout the land. From the eighth to the fifteenth century the religion of the whole country was in subjection to Rome, not,

however, without many and vigorous protests. Some of these were avowedly against infant baptism. An illustration may be found in the sad story of Gerard and his companions in the reign of King Henry the Second, who, having amongst other things rejected the baptism of infants, were branded, whipped through the streets of Oxford, stripped, and turned into the woods naked in the depth of winter. There they disappear from history. It must not be forgotten that the archives of those centuries were in the charge of men who avowedly cared more for their church system than for truth. Papal ecclesiastics are unsurpassed in their power of silencing witnesses for the truth as it is in Jesus, and Papal historians in suppressing the witness often sealed with blood. Baptism during those centuries, so far as the records remain, was by trine immersion and administered to unconscious infants. Rarely was any other mode practised except in cases of emergency. All the ancient fonts in churches of the pre-Reformation age were made and used for complete dipping.

THE SARUM USE.

It is a fact not generally known that there was no uniform liturgy of the Church of Rome until about the era of the great Reformation. The *Missale Romanum*, the Romish prayer book, was put forth in 1571, when Pope Pius the Fifth enjoined its use on each church which had not followed a ritual of its own for more than two centuries. Each diocese previous to this time was at liberty to adopt its own prayer book. The most celebrated one in England was that belonging to the See of Salisbury, which was widely used in other sees as well.

It is ascribed to Bishop Osmund who died in the year 1099. In the great ritualistic controversy of our day this work is repeatedly referred to as of high authority. Let us examine its teaching upon baptism. There is first a long introductory ceremony to be observed at the door of the church. When the party approaches the font it is noteworthy that, first of all, a profession of faith is required. The infant is asked, "Dost thou renounce Satan? Believest thou," etc. It is in the name of the child that the answer comes. Godfathers and Godmothers answer not "We believe," but "I believe." The service here evidently recognises that there can be no true baptism without first a profession of faith. This is clear in the last question, which is "Willest thou to be baptized?" not "Do ye bring this infant to be baptized?" The answer is "I will." This instruction follows, "Then let the priest take the child by his sides in his hands, and having asked his name, let him dip him thrice, invoking the Holy Trinity thus: 'N., I baptize thee in the name of the Father' (and let him dip him the first time with his face to the North, and his head towards the East), 'and of the Son,' (the second time let him dip him once with his head to the South), 'and of the Holy Spirit, Amen' (and let him dip him the third time with his face towards the water). Afterwards let the child be clothed with his chrim-robe, the priest asking his name, and saying, 'N., Take the white holy and unspotted vesture that thou mayest bear it before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that thou mayest have eternal life and live for ever and ever. Amen.'"

IMMERSION THE PRACTICE.

Amidst the darkness which prevailed throughout these

centuries of Papal supremacy there does not appear to have been two opinions with regard to immersion. The first authoritative departure from immersion in England is found in the first prayer book of King Edward the Sixth, A.D. 1549. The directions are: "Then the priest shall take the childe in his handes and aske the name. And namyng the childe shall dippe it in the water thrise; first, dyppying the right side; second, the left side; third tyme, dyppying the face toward the fonte; so it be discretly and warely done, saying: 'N, I baptize thee,' etc. And if the childe be weake it shal suffice to power water upon it, saiyng the foresayd wordes."

The second Prayer Book of Edward, A.D. 1550, omitted the word "thrise" and all relating to that, but retained the permission for a weak child. On this was based the Prayer Book of A.D. 1661, the one in use to-day.

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

The assembly of divines which met in Westminster convened for the work of the Reformation of the Church by the authority of Parliament, A.D. 1643, was a memorable Protestant Council. To it we owe the Assembly's Catechism. Dr. Lightfoot preserved a journal of the proceedings. Not a Baptist was present. Under date, July 12th, 1644, he writes: "Then fell we upon the work of the day forward upon the Directory for Baptism." On Wednesday, August 7th, Session 262: After a long dispute it was at last put to the question whether the Directory should run thus: "The minister shall take water and sprinkle or pour it with his hand upon the face or forehead of the child," and it was voted so indifferently that we were glad to count names twice, for so many

were unwilling to have dipping excluded that the votes came to an equality within one; for the one side was twenty-four, the other twenty-five: the twenty-four for the reserving of dipping and the twenty-five against it, and there grew a great heat upon it: and when we had done all we concluded upon nothing in it; but the business was recommitted." On August 8th there was again a warm debate on which the decisive vote was taken. Dr. Lightfoot records: "As for the dispute itself about dipping it was thought fit and most safe to let it alone and to express it thus in our directory: 'He is to baptize the child with water, which for the manner of doing is not only lawful but also sufficient, and most expedient to be by pouring or sprinkling water on the face of the child without any other ceremony.' But this cost a great deal of time in the wording of it." This was an assembly of Pædobaptists, and Dr. Lightfoot was a strong advocate of sprinkling. Emerging from the darkness of Romanism their vision was not clear.



Chapter xii.

SPRINKLING UNCONSCIOUS BABES.

THERE is a great distinction between conscious and unconscious children. Baptists practise children's baptism. Sponsors are derived from a civil practice in Roman Law. Roman Catholicism derives its ceremonies more from heathenism than the New Testament. Pouring, then sprinkling, came in gradually. The great scholastic theologians raised many curious questions on baptism. The Reformation was sadly incomplete.

IT is important in studying the history of baptism to keep prominent the distinction between baptism of infants and that of unconscious babes. The term infant really means minor. It is still used in law for such as are too young for full citizenship. Troops in a subordinate position are called infantry. Infant baptism, in the exact sense of the words, is practised amongst Baptists. Little children at a very early age may possess genuine piety, and are equal to the spirit of the ordinance: "The answer of a good conscience towards God," and hence may receive the seal. It is, and ever has been, an anxiety with true pastors to ascertain in a young person's profession whether there is such evidence of the grace of

God as will justify baptism, which is the endorsement of the church.

BAPTISM BY PROXY.

The administration of the ordinance to unconscious babes, on a profession made by proxy, or by sponsors, appears to have been the importation into the church of a Roman legal practice for civil purposes. The sponsor was one who became surety for the obligation of another. The introduction met with vigorous opposition, for religion by substitute is contrary to the genius of the gospel.

INTERMEDIATE STAGE OF POURING.

According to the Talmud the water in the baptistery for proselytes was to be running, hence during the ceremony it was continually poured in from a pipe at the top. Such is the practice now in synagogues. In the Christian Church it has often occurred that a person too ill for baptism has earnestly desired it. The proper course in such a case is to instruct the person that the spirit of the ordinance may be met by profession, but the formal part of the command cannot be obeyed by a superstitious substitution for which Holy Scripture gives no authority. It is not doing what we are told, to do something else. A sprinkled person is still unbaptized. As men began to substitute their own notions instead of implicit obedience, in cases of severe sickness some kind of imitation was resorted to, in the first instance by profuse pouring, then pouring a little on the face, then dropping some from the hand, then wetting in some form, eventually sprinkling. This was at first, and for long,

only resorted to in cases of extreme necessity, when there was danger of death. Its validity as baptism was questioned. At the best it was considered an inferior kind of profession which disqualified from ministerial office. It was long before sprinkling came to be recognized as equally valid with immersion. The first known authoritative utterance in its favor is that of the Council of Ravenna, A.D. 1311.

QUESTIONS UPON IMMERSION.

Amidst the vagaries of those subtle writers called scholastic theologians, many questions in relation to baptism arose. Seeing that baptism means immersion, would it be valid in air, in sand, or in oil? Hence in the forefront of the Canons of the Council of Trent on the subject, comes an anathema upon any one who says that water is not essential. Although, keeping to the exact letter of the commission, immersion in oil would be more correct than sprinkling with water. But it is a departure from New Testament instruction to attempt either. If the precept cannot be obeyed as Christ gave it, then He in His providence ceases to make it binding. Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the twelfth century, was perhaps the most erudite theologian the world has ever seen. In his *Summa Theologica*, which touches upon almost every conceivable question in Divinity, dealing with baptism, he arrives at the conclusion:—"Not only by immersion, but also by aspersion or effusion of water is it right to administer baptism. It is nevertheless safer, because this is the common use, to baptize by the mode of immersion." These schoolmen delighted in discussing all kinds of subtleties. On baptism for example,

decisions were given that it is valid "in water from the sea, rain, springs, whether sweet or salt, turbid, colored, melted from hail, ice, snow, taken from the pavement or walk whilst raining." But it is not valid from "saliva, perspiration, tears, ink, juice of apples" and so on. Baptism is "doubtful in broth, ale, lye water, rose water, liquefied salt, or the sap of a tree," but Pope Stephen thought it might be in wine. "It will not suffice to use ice or snow unless it is first melted." "He sins gravely who without necessity uses dirty water." It is not valid baptism, if seeing a child fall into the water the formula is called out, but it is different if he be held with a rope. It is wrong to omit or change a single word in the formula, but a bishop may say, "We baptize thee," and a priest with a prince may say, "I baptize you." A nurse was taking a babe to the church; on the way the child had a fit, so she being alarmed touched the face with a wet bouquet and uttered the formula; the child recovered, the priest doubted whether it had been actually wetted, so he poured water on the child and said the formula secretly. Several perplexing questions arise here. A nurse being drunk, once christened the child in the name of the Devil, and never mentioned it to anyone until she lay on her death-bed many years after; the child became a bishop; this gave rise to a number of serious problems; all the ordinations of priests he had done, and all the rites those priests had performed, were invalid, for such a baptism was certainly in vain. Another very ignorant nurse in her anxiety christened in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and Satan; the decision on high authority was that that was genuine regeneration.

These, taken from Romish works on Case Theology, may be sufficient to illustrate the perplexities involved in a departure from the plain simple precepts of Scripture. Some still more serious problems arise out of the question of the intention of the one who baptizes, for unless that is right, no ordinance is validly administered, according to Romish theologians.

THE REFORMATION INCOMPLETE.

No part of the work of the Reformation is more unsatisfactory than that which relates to baptism. In doctrine the Reformers went to the root of the whole matter, and proclaimed justification by faith. Had they acted similarly with regard to the idea of a church and its ordinances the results would have been very different. Strange to say, the fifteenth century was the period in which the change became general from immersion to dropping or sprinkling, and the great reformed churches sanctioned the perverted practice. The Reformers appear to have been greatly alarmed by sundry reports about the Anabaptists. It is evident that, as in the case of the Stundists of later times, these people were grossly misrepresented, and the follies of some extreme men of their age were attributed to them. Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and other leaders either could not or would not distinguish them from some anarchists which were seeking to propagate the wildest notions. It was an unhappy result that these great and good men, instead of enquiring candidly into the Scriptural directions for baptism, had their minds so sorely prejudiced by what they heard, true or false, about the men of Munster. And the result

has been disastrous for the church and the world. For the perversion of a Divine command cannot be persevered in without an evil effect. Many pious Pædobaptists do their utmost to neutralize the mischief of the ceremony by subsequent teaching. But millions are building their faith on the font rather than Christ!





Chapter xiii.

THE BAPTISMAL INVENTION OF JOHN CALVIN.

THE great theologian John Calvin introduced quite a new conception of baptism. It was that the children of believers are born into the kingdom and hence do not need the new birth. In this his clear intellect was probably darkened by false reports concerning the Anabaptists and his dislike of Servetus.

THE influence of John Calvin, one of the master minds of the world, has been immense in religious thought. Not the least so on the subject of baptism, of which ordinance of our Lord he invented a new and perverted theory which has been accepted by multitudes, and evolved the chaotic idea prevalent at the present time.

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

The theory of the Romish Church, if unscriptural, is yet intelligent. The definition of the Council of Trent is this: "Baptism may be accurately and appositely defined to be the sacrament of regeneration by water in the word ;

for by nature we are born from Adam, children of wrath, but by baptism we are regenerated in Christ, children of mercy. The people must be taught that this sacrament consists of ablution, accompanied necessarily according to the institution of our Lord, by determinate and solemn words." So that there are two considerations—ablution and formula. Upon the formula there is substantial agreement throughout Christendom. "Ablution," the Tridentine Council asserts, "is not more really accomplished by the immersion of any one in water, which was long observed from the earliest times of the church, than by the affusion thereof which we now perceive to be the general practice, or aspersion the manner in which, there is reason to believe, Peter administered baptism when one day he converted and baptized three thousand persons." It is worthy of note here that the idea of sprinkling arises from a Romish assumption of the supremacy of Peter. There is no Scriptural authority for this, no evidence indeed that he baptized more than any other of the apostles, or even of the one hundred and twenty disciples at that time in Jerusalem. The next article in the catechism tells us: "The rite, however, which each individual finds observed in his own church is to be retained by the faithful." That is to say the church arranges its own ordinances. Such was the papal doctrine at the time of the Reformation. Baptism was regeneration, therefore it would be an awful thing for children not to be baptized. The church could administer it as she chose, therefore the easier the better. The sprinkling of babes was the logical result.

CALVIN'S INSTITUTES.

What had John Calvin to teach upon this: That so

powerful an intellect and so holy a man did not get clear away from the error is a mystery. His shortcoming has proved as calamitous as it is inexplicable. "Calvin's Institutes" became the Protestant "Decrees of the Council of Trent." The Reformers for the most part evidently wished to retain the practice of infant baptism, and yet reject its foundation stone, baptismal regeneration. This led John Calvin to discover a novel and altogether original view of the subject.

THE MODE.

First let us note what he says on the mode. "It is right both for me and for all pious men to hurl back whatsoever things men have presumed to add to the institution of Christ. When Satan saw that in the foolish credulity of the world at the very beginning of the gospel his impostures were received, he brake forth into grosser mockeries. Hence spittle and like trifling were openly brought in with unbridled liberty, to the reproach of baptism. By which experience we may learn that nothing is either holier, or better, or safer than to be content with the authority of Christ alone." Would that the great Reformer had but carried out this noble teaching! He goes on, desiring "That the only ceremony which proceeded from God as the author should shine forth very clearly, being not overwhelmed with any exotic filth. But whether he who is dyed (baptized) is wholly dipped and that thrice or once, or whether by water poured upon merely, or sprinkled, matters little; it may be left to the diversity of countries. Howbeit, the very word for baptizing signifies to dip, and it is certain that the manner of dipping was used in the ancient church." A remarkable and inconsistent passage. For if it be holier, better

and safer, to be content with the authority of Christ alone, what liberty have the churches according to the diversity of countries to change the ordinance? The un-wisdom here finds a curious illustration. It is an interesting fact that to-day it is in the warmer countries where there is more laxity that the change to sprinkling prevails; in the northern or colder where there is more sturdiness immersion has been retained.

THE SIGNIFICATION.

The fifteenth chapter of the fourth book of the *Institutes of Christian Religion* treats of baptism. It opens: "Baptism is the sign of the initiation by which we are received into fellowship of the church, that being grafted into Christ we may be reckoned among the children of God." It was given us by God to this end; first, that it should serve our faith in Him as a legal document, and second, to our confession before men. He proceeds to state that baptism is: first, a token of our cleansing, and not a mere mark of profession; it speaks of the washing out of all sin, not merely the sins of the past. Secondly, it shows death and rising to newness of life. Thirdly, it testifies our ingrafting into Christ. He says further: "Whatsoever gifts of God are set forth in baptism are found in Christ alone." "It is a mark whereby we openly profess that we should be accounted among the people of God." "Of this sacrament we obtain nothing but so much as we receive by faith." This Scriptural teaching is diametrically opposed to the admission of unconscious babes to the solemn rite, but a mystery follows. The next chapter is headed, "That Pædobaptism doth agree

with the institution of Christ and the nature of the sign."

THE SUBJECTS.

How can this be? John Calvin invented an entirely new doctrinal defence for the administration of the rite to unconscious babes. He saw clearly that baptism was not regeneration, but the seal of regeneration, two different things. Here, then, was a problem for a vigorous intellect. How could a justification be formed for placing the seal on new-born children? By the ingenious discovery that the children of pious parents are in the covenant! They are born Christians! Thus he says: "Hence it follows that not so are the children of believers baptized, that, then for the first time, they are made the children of God which before were aliens from the church, but rather by a formal sign so are they received into the church, and that in virtue of the promise, for they previously belonged to the body of Christ." Two or three more quotations may show this opinion more clearly. "The children of Christians if by reason only of one faithful parent by the testimony of the Apostle (I. Cor. vii. 14) differ from the unclean seed of idolators." His chief argument is derived from the analogy of circumcision. He argues that the infant of Abraham by right of inheritance, according to promise, was from his birth in the covenant. "That the matter may be clearly and briefly shown, if the children of the faithful without the support of intelligence are partakers of the covenant there is no cause why they should be debarred from the sign." "For without doubt He esteemeth as His children of those to whose seed He promised to be a Father." "Here is a compendium of the whole business

unless I err. They who in grown age embrace the faith of Christ, forasmuch as they were hitherto strangers from the covenant, are not to receive the sign of baptism unless faith and repentance intervene, which gives them entry into the fellowship of the covenant. But those infants which are the issue of Christians as they have been received of God into the inheritance of the covenant so soon as they are born, so ought they to be admitted to baptism." "To us, indeed, great is the authority of God Whom it hath pleased to make infants holy to Himself, and to admit them with the holy sign." And he thus concludes: "Wherefore, unless we desire to darken God's goodness, let us offer to Him our children, to whom He giveth a place amongst those of His family and household, that is to say, the members of His church." This view confines infant baptism to the children of pious parents, and to their seed only. The later evolution, that which is the popular view at the present time, is that all human babes are the children of God. John Calvin's view marks an infinite difference between those born of Christians, and those who are not. It denies, not affirms, the universal Fatherhood of God. The idea is precisely the contrary of the opinion of his followers now. It is in effect the error which was contradicted by John, who asserted that the sons of God are those born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

CHARACTER OF CALVIN'S ARGUMENT.

Among the misty reasonings of the Reformation dawn the chapter of *Calvin's Institutes* which deals with baptism is very remarkable. A tinge of doubt colors the

writing, and something more than a tinge of temper. The cause of the oblique vision in this instance appears to be not difficult to discover. It originated in that sad failing which marred the character and has dimmed the glory of one of the greatest, noblest and best men the world has ever seen. The fame of John Calvin would have been very different had it not been for his lifelong animosity to Michael Servetus. That the brilliant Spaniard was as bad as he was bold is probably true; and that Calvin was justified in his abhorrence of the man's conduct. But hatred of men is injurious to clear vision. And John Calvin was certainly in error, when speaking of the opponents of infant sprinkling of his age he called Servetus "not the least of the Anabaptists, yea, the great glory of that crowd." And again: "Servetus, one of their masters." Some of his expressions relating to the Baptists of that age read strangely now. He calls them "certain ferocious beasts that do not cease to assail this holy institution of God." They "color a more shameless lie" when they speak of circumcision as a literal and earthly sign. At length he breaks out when the argument of the Great Commission, showing discipling to precede baptism, is before him. "O, good God, in how many fashions do they both entangle themselves and betray their own ignorance!" and, in closing, asserts: "It is not surprising that these reprobate spirits, as though they were vexed with a phrenzy, do thrust in all the grossest absurdities for defence of their errors, for God doth justly avenge their pride and stubbornness by such giddiness. Assuredly, I believe I have made it plain with what feeble succours Servetus hath helped his silly brethren the Anabaptists."

CHANGE OF IDEA, BUT NOT OF PRACTICE.

Such, then, was the baptism invented by John Calvin. It was simply that the children of pious parents are in the covenant by right of birth, and are of a totally different class from other children, and therefore ought to receive the seal. Coming from the great Reformation theologian it could not but be accepted at first, and it could not but be rejected after a while. Probably no one holds it now. There is, unhappily, a sheep-like tendency in the thinking of Christian men. If they depart from the fold and find no rest they are inclined not to return but to go farther astray. The notion soon developed, so that persons who had adopted children, or had taken care of little orphans, desired to have them baptized. Then came the belief that all children are in the covenant and therefore all should be baptized. At length it has degenerated into a custom, and with many a seal of nothing at all. Centuries have passed, but the evil seed still bears fruit. Calvin, Servetus and the disliked humble Baptist *Fratercule*, have long since passed into realms where they better know the vital force of language, and the priceless value of loving, helpful words.



Chapter xib.

THREE ROYAL CHRISTENINGS.

THE narrative of three royal christenings, given to illustrate degeneracy in baptismal practice.

1. Clovis; immersion with profession.
2. Queen Elizabeth, in the sixteenth century; immersion without profession.
3. The British heir apparent; neither immersion nor profession.

THE following three narratives of baptism, selected from different periods of history, will illustrate the degrading of the rite from apostolic times. Royal ceremonies have been chosen on two accounts. First, they may be regarded as fairly representing the ideas of the age when they occurred. Second, the records have been preserved with great minuteness and care.

1.—IMMERSION WITH PROFESSION.

The story of the baptism of Clovis, King of the Franks, is a vivid point in history. It took place December 25th, A.D. 496, in the cathedral baptistery at Rheims. Clovis was an ambitious warrior. His wife, Clotilda, was a

Christian. By her he was led to offer a prayer to Christ, which has been preserved on record. Among other petitions was this: "If Thou wilt favor me with triumph over these foes, then I shall have proof of the power of Thy name. Then I will believe in Thee and be baptized." A great victory followed. Clovis sent for the bishop to instruct him in Christianity. At length, Remigius arranged for the baptism. The baptistery or font, which was afterwards removed to Paris, was a cistern of polished granite, seven feet long, and two and a half feet wide and deep. The function was gorgeous; soft music and sweet odours filled the church. The monarch advanced to the font professing his belief in Christ. A picture is extant of the baptism. It represents Clovis standing nude in the water up to his loins. The bishop is in full canonicals by the side, and the church is crowded. The chief warriors of the army, to the number of about three thousand, it is also reported, came forward the same day and were also baptized on a profession of faith. In the picture two soldiers are represented stripping for that purpose. So the king obtained the title of the "Eldest son of the church," which was afterwards retained by the monarchs of France. Several accounts of the scene are extant. There was both profession and immersion. But no mention made of children. The immersion was in all probability trine, one at the name of each person of the Holy Trinity. There were some added ceremonies, departures from apostolic simplicity, but the essential parts of the ceremony were observed.

2.—IMMERSION WITHOUT PROFESSION.

In the Harleian Library of the British Museum there

has been preserved a full account of the ceremonies prescribed for the christening of the royal children of King Henry VIII., and a detailed narrative of the baptism of Prince Arthur, and also of Elizabeth, afterwards the famous Queen of England. Queen Elizabeth was probably the last of the monarchs of England who was immersed, King James having, it is said, been sprinkled. It is recorded that some Scottish exiles in Geneva obtained a book published in 1556 in which, with the sanction of John Calvin, the administrator of baptism is enjoined to take water in his hand and lay it upon the forehead. This they brought to Scotland on their return, and so introduced the practice of sprinkling into the land. The narrative of the ceremony at Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the Princess Elizabeth's christening has been recorded very fully. The rich silver gilt font at Canterbury was fetched for the occasion and decorated with cloth of gold. It was especially directed that it was to be covered all over the bottom with "soft raynes" (a kind of cloth) laid in divers folds. There was a grand procession marshalled with due parade. The sergeant of the king's pantry had to be in attendance with "a fair towel of raynes" about his neck. The font was to be elevated that all present might see, there was to be a high block for the bishop to stand upon "covered with red say." The Bishop of Ely received the procession at the porch and went through certain ceremonies there. It was very particularly directed that a screen was to be placed on the north side of the church, behind which was to be a pan of burning coals, with sweet perfumes to be thrown thereon if there was necessity, and silver basins for washing the child if need be "to make ready for the

changing of the child out of the clothes." Foremost in the procession came "My Lady Anne, the Queene's sister, who bore the Crysme with a marvellous riche Cross Lace." This was the dry robe for the child after being dipped. Whilst the infant was being made ready, the font was hallowed. The Marquis of Barkely carried the babe. The party had spices and wines, and when prepared proceeded to the font. "As soon as she was put into the font all the torches were lighted." Afterwards the child had a lighted taper placed in her hand, she appears to have been carried behind the screen again, and after some attention there was taken to the high altar. Then came the presentation of christening gifts. Amongst others the Viscount Lyle brought "a holy water stoke with a spryngell of gold, garnished with precious stones, which her godfather gave her." What this was is not clear, apparently for sprinkling holy water about, but not as part of the baptismal service. In the provision of the screen we see the arrangements for dressing and undressing. After further description of the pomp and show, the chronicler concludes; "Thus in order with noise of trumpets she returned with Christ's blessing. Amen."

3.—NEITHER IMMERSION NOR PROFESSION.

On Monday, July 16, 1894, there was a royal christening at White Lodge, Richmond. It was the infant son of the Duke and Duchess of York, and the heir presumptive to the British throne. All the members of the royal family of England were present. The Queen herself handed the child to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He performed the ceremony, which was of a very simple

character, he read the appointed prayers, then sprinkled the child on the face from a golden bowl with some water brought from the river Jordan. The lad received four names—George, Andrew, Patrick, David—representing the four patron saints of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The prince cried a little. The points chiefly noted by the chroniclers were the dress of the ladies, the cake, and the magnificent christening robe of Honiton lace. The service used was that in the Anglican Prayer-book for “the ministration of private baptism of children in houses.” That does not prescribe baptism at all, but orders that “the minister shall pour water upon” the child. Sprinkling was doubly wrong, not only against Scripture, but against the Prayer-book. The rubric tells us this service must not be used “without great cause and necessity.” This is generally understood to mean feeble health. But the prince was a fine, strong child. Did the archbishop consider royalty a “great cause and necessity”? There is another curious rubric in this service: “Yet nevertheless if the child which is after this sort baptized”—we mark the singular and not inappropriate phrase—“do afterward live” (so that this service was evidently intended for children apparently at the point of death), “it is expedient that it be brought into the church” for enquiry into whether the rite was properly performed. “If the child were baptized by any other lawful minister, then the minister of the parish where the child was born or christened shall examine or try whether the child be lawfully baptized or no.” It has not been reported that this has been since observed. The symbol of the degeneracy in this, the nineteenth century of the

Christian era, is saddening. At one of the most important functions, ministered by the highest authority, Christianity was represented, not as that into which souls are immersed—something thorough—but as just a little sprinkling, touching only the face, and speedily evaporating away.





Chapter xv.

THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION.

FAITH assures us that God has been leading His Church aright all the way along. There were many Baptists and churches in the Dark Ages. Definition of a church. With the Reformation churches came to the light. Broadmead records. To-day there are fifty thousand Baptist churches. Their aim is not to erect a grand, worldly, ecclesiastical system, but to develop strong Christian character. Baptists have a noble record and a glorious future.

WE form a very erroneous judgment if we conclude that during the centuries of Rome's supremacy, obedience to Christ was unknown, and that there were no Christian churches. There were in every age some—more perhaps than we imagine, certainly than we know of—who read the Bible and obeyed the truth. Baptists there were, for multitudes were immersed on a profession of their faith. But they were unable to form churches, and probably in those days would not have considered it their duty to separate. It is certain that,

whenever they attempted to do so, they were immediately dispersed by the strong hand of the law, their testimony was silenced by their blood, and care taken no true record should be preserved.

THE TRUE CHURCH NEVER FORSAKEN.

The most absolute confidence ought ever to be placed in the wisdom of God in the guidance of His Church. Its wealth and glory were never to be of this world. The Lord Christ promised that He would be with His people to the ends of the world, and that the gates of hell should never prevail against His Church. The recognition of this should guide our study of history. First, we cannot wholly trust uninspired accounts; for many ages it was regarded as not only a duty to suppress opinion but also the very record of its utterance. Secondly, we know not the Divine intention with regard to the church upon earth. It may be that throughout all those centuries of oppression and wrong, so dark as they appear to us, that multitudes of true believers were saved by the grace of God, that souls in great numbers and high spiritual culture passed through the pearly gates into the New Paradise. The student of history in its hidden springs, in out-of-the-way nooks of past records, is often astonished at the discovery of instances of deep piety, Scriptural knowledge, clear vision and regal spiritual attainment. Men there were of whom the world was not worthy, not even that their name should be upon its annals.

BAPTIST CHURCHES.

The great Reformation was political as well as religious. It brought freedom. Christian churches were able to

come to the light. The unscripturalness of one gigantic overwhelming ecclesiastical system was not only seen, but holy men and women felt it their duty to become separate from it. The call was heard : " Come out of her, My people." In every direction churches having the Bible as their supreme authority, and Jesus Christ as their bishop, were not only formed but were able to continue. The nineteenth article of the Church of England thus accurately defines a church : " The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered, according to Christ's ordinances, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." Men with the Bible in their hands would, when free from persecution, ask : " Where is the true church?" " Where are the sacraments?" " Where is baptism duly administered?" And thus enquiring would, finding others similarly illuminated, unite with them into a holy fellowship ; and thus a church of the Lord Jesus Christ would be formed. This had probably been the case from New Testament times, but the revived freedom from ecclesiastical domination gave new opportunities. Some writers have laid great stress upon a statement of Thomas Crosby in his history of English Baptists from the Reformation. He relates the constitution of a distinct Baptist church in London on September 12th, A.D. 1633, with about twenty members, under the pastorate of Mr. John Spilsbury. But there are many churches still extant which have an older record. Tiverton dates from 1607, Braintree 1550, Shrewsbury 1620, Bridgwater 1600 and Coventry 1626. This does not exhaust the list. There is a church at

Hill Cliff, Warrington, which dates back to 1522, and by some thought to have been formed much earlier. It is most necessary here to guard against a serious error. The New Testament ideal is not the building up of some splendid organization, which is the worldly idea of a church, but the gathering of believers into brotherhoods for fellowship, worship and work. These may be formed and broken up and pass away. The principle of association is often sympathy rather than locality. Baptists aim at forming churches on the New Testament model, not a church according to worldly ideal. National churches have ever been marked by departure from the New Testament doctrine, and have become corrupt. Pure Christianity was kept alive during many centuries by little churches of which we have so many indications of their existence and so little account of their proceedings. In 1568 a complaint was made that Baptist meeting-houses were harboring foreign heretics. Certainly many Baptist pastors suffered severe persecution during the reign of King James. The last martyr burned in England for his faith was a Baptist, Edward Wightman, who suffered at Lichfield, April 11th, 1612.

THE BROADMEAD RECORDS.

It is difficult for State churchmen, the records of whose ecclesiastical system form part of national annals, to understand the Scriptural idea of churches as humble brotherhoods whose record is on high. Few of the old churches preserved any account of their history. One of the churches of Bristol, that at Broadmead, has kept its books from 1640, and the narrative is of profound interest. Take an extract: "On the 29th of November,

1685, our Pastor, Brother Fownes, died in Gloucester jail, having been kept there for two years and about nine months a prisoner, unjustly and maliciously, for the testimony of Jesus and preaching the gospel. He was a man of great learning, of a sound judgment, an able preacher; having great knowledge in divinity, law, physic, etc.; a bold, patient sufferer for the Lord Jesus and the gospel he preached." Such, rather than State ceremonies of worldly pomp and show, would be annals of Baptist churches had they been preserved. Another Pastor, Thomas Hardcastle, writes from Newgate, September 8th, 1675: "If Satan be angry with you and me, I can be glad with it, provided God be less angry with us. It is a small matter to be persecuted by sinners, or to be judged by others; our judgment remains with the Lord. And can you think, my dear friends, that the Eternal Almighty God is angry with us the more, because we have trusted His power the more, and ventured ourselves upon Him? Can we think that He will leave us without a blessing, because we will not subject our public worship and minister to the appearance of men and power of magistrates, in the sinful execution of their office? No. No. God will never take this amiss from you nor blame you for it. Did He ever blame you for it? Did He ever blame anyone that trusted in Him in the way of his duties? Where are the promises? What signifies the power of God? Where is it to be made use of? Blot out these texts or else read them over and believe them." Which was the truest church of Christ at that hour? The gigantic persecuting association, with black Newgate for those who sought obedience to Christ; or the simple humble band who trusted the word of the

Lord and kept the ordinances as He had appointed them?

BAPTISTS TO-DAY.

There are now, it may be estimated in round figures, about fifty thousand Christian churches which are founded solely on the principles and precedents of the New Testament practising baptism by immersion, and not far short of five millions of people in their communion; besides many other Christian men and women who have obeyed Christ's command and are in sympathy with Baptist principles, but have not separated themselves from churches practising infant baptism. This represents an immense spiritual force. Baptists have all along stood for individuality in religion. Their profession has not been made in a compulsory way, but freely and intelligently. Baptism asserts at the commencement of the divine life the responsibility of the individual. The aim of Baptist churches is not to erect a gigantic all-embracing hierarchy that shall rule far and wide but to develop strong Christian character. Baptism asserts the thoroughness of true piety, tinging and giving its color to every part of the nature. Baptists do not seek to conquer by pomp of ceremony, or alliance with the State, but by thoroughness of life, by manifestation of the truth to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Their aim is not to build up cathedrals magnificent in architecture, with a dazzling ritual of lace and jewels, but in the simplest, most direct way to convince men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. They point not to a church system but to Christ, caring little for organization, but for the truth to live and reign in the hearts of men. Baptists have ever been in the

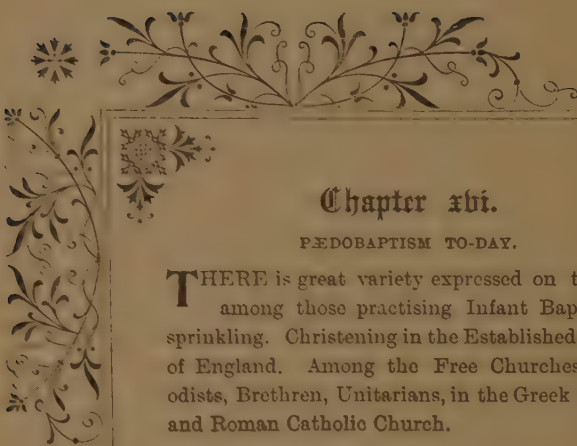
van of human progress. They have all along led in the opposition to tyranny and on behalf of the oppressed. They were foremost in the great conflict with the curse of slavery. The introduction of baptism into the West Indies soon struck off the shackles from the slave. Later on Baptists did their share in destroying the gigantic bondage of America. In Great Britain they were the earliest to give definite utterance to the great principles of religious liberty. They were the first in modern times to revive in the churches an obedience to our Lord's Great Commission and led in the glory of the present age the far-reaching, Christ-honoring, and honored mission enterprise. They have ever been among the poor and the despised, feeble in wealth and courtly influence, but with their spiritual power recognized by all. Some of the greatest preachers in modern times have been in their ranks. Whatever may be the opinion of the great and noble of this world, they who hold the Bible in their hands have no reason for shame in being numbered with Baptists. Their churches as nearly resemble, as the great Episcopal system is far away from resembling, the churches of the New Testament.

BAPTISTS IN THE FUTURE.

And their future is exceedingly bright. The time is coming when the glory will be given to individuals and not systems, to men and not to their dress and decorations. More and more clearly is it seen that there must be a supreme rule of faith, and that will be the Bible, the one book of Baptists. All things are tending toward a more Christlike era. It cannot but be that the men who despise the conventional ideals and practices of the

world and resolve upon paying more honor to those of Christ will be the men of the coming age. The resources of worldly glory are worked out, the resources of the glory of Christ are unsearchable. Every true and strong tendency is in the direction of that ideal of life which the Baptists have ever kept to the front.





Chapter xvi.

PÆDOBAPTISM TO-DAY.

THERE is great variety expressed on the idea among those practising Infant Baptism or sprinkling. Christening in the Established Church of England. Among the Free Churches, Methodists, Brethren, Unitarians, in the Greek Church, and Roman Catholic Church.

AMID uniformity of practice there is the greatest possible diversity of opinion amongst Pædobaptists at the present time. Some think sprinkling the right mode, some that it is a permissible departure from the original ordinance to suit a cold climate; some that it is not sprinkling but an imitation of pouring, and some that the form is of no consequence, so that water is used. It is, however, noteworthy that of the two factors of the mode—water and its method of application—the precept says nothing of the former but is definite for the latter. The command is to be immersed, the use of water inferred. The opinion favored in modern

churches is just the reverse; it is said that the command is to use water, and the mode of little consequence. Some believe, with the founders of infant baptism, that it washes away original sin, some that it is an expression of the sinlessness of the babe. Some hold that it is regeneration and essential to salvation, some that it is affixing a distinctive mark on infants who are saved. Some that it is the initiatory rite into Christianity, some that it is a profession of faith made by proxy. Some that it is an actual consecration of the child to God, some that it is a dedicatory service having reference to future education. Some that it is a church ordinance to be obeyed, some that it a fashionable ceremony and the proper thing to do.

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The "Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments" leaves little to be desired in definite statement on the matter of baptism. The very first lesson of the church catechism teaches the child to say: "In my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." It is important to notice that the word here used is *made*, which excludes the notion that it is the sealing of one born in the kingdom, and the other notion that it is a dedication to be trained to enter the Kingdom. The priest, in the baptismal service, after using water, says: "This child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church. Let us give thanks to Almighty God." Then follows the prayer worded to indicate that this is not expressive of the regeneration of a creed, a view introduced by the Gnostics into the early church:

"We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into Thy holy Church." There is indeed a sense in which the Scriptural idea of faith comes in. Sponsors, before the application of the water, have to make a definite profession of steadfast belief in the creed. And the curious point is, that questions are so put that the child, by proxy, makes the profession. "Minister: Wilt thou be baptized in this faith? Answer: That is my desire." Let us mark, the question is not "Shall this child be baptized?" but "Wilt thou?" Then, following the naming, the rubric is: "And then, naming it after them (if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it), he shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily saying," etc. "But if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it, saying the foresaid words." These rubrics are now considerably neglected. Sprinkling, for which there is no authority, has become the rule. No certifying is asked. The ancient fonts were all large enough for immersion. In the service "for such as are of riper years" the rubric is clear. After the naming the minister is instructed: "And then shall dip him in the water or pour water upon him, saying," etc. There are Anglican churches—one at Southampton and one at Cardiff, for example—where a proper font or pool for immersion is found, although obedience is rare. There are three baptismal services in the Prayer Book. The first can hardly be said to give an option between dipping and sprinkling. The second prescribes pouring only. The third—for "such as are of riper years"—

gives an option between dipping and pouring. But not one commands sprinkling. That has no authority from either the Bible or the Prayer Book.

FREE CHURCH PÆDOBAPTISTS.

The view of the Westminster Assembly, as stated in "the Shorter Catechism," is that generally accepted by the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists: "Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our engrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefit of the covenant of grace and an engagement to be the Lord's." "Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, but the infants of such as are members of the visible Church are to be baptized." Opinions, however, vary as to the subjects. Some consider that the ordinance should only be administered to the children of church members, some to all children brought for the purpose. The administration is generally reduced to the simplest form possible. In some places of worship there is a font, in some a bowl of water is brought in when needed. The rite is generally attended to at a Sabbath morning's service, when the minister takes the infant on his left arm, sprinkles or pours from his right hand a few drops of water on its face, pronouncing the baptismal formula, and adding words of counsel to the parents and a special prayer suited to the occasion. All are agreed that where there has been no observance in infancy, baptism must be by profession of faith, and that immersion is a right and Scriptural, if not necessary, form. Cases occasionally

occur in which Pædobaptist ministers borrow the use of Baptist meeting-houses and conduct the ordinance in the ancient mode.

THE METHODISTS.

The Methodists may fairly claim to be the most advanced sect in Christendom in regard to baptism. In the "Order of Administration of the Sacraments for the use of the People called Methodists," published at the Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, sprinkling is put in the first place, not as a permissive form, as with other large Pædobaptist bodies. The direction for the ministration of baptism opens: "All parents bringing their children to be baptized are to be reminded that they thereby devote them to God, and are pledged to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and that the Sacrament of Baptism is administered on their virtual promise, by the grace of God, so to do." According to this, baptism amounts to a parental rather than a personal rite. After prayer and counsel, the rubric proceeds: "Here all the congregation shall stand, and the minister, taking the child into his arms, shall say to the parents or friends 'Name this child.' And naming it after them, he shall sprinkle it with water, saying, 'N, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, that he may be instructed and trained in the doctrines, privileges, and duties of the Christian religion; and trust that he will be Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.'" John Wesley once wrote: "Let our Lord's submission to baptism teach us exactness in the observance of those institutions which owe their obligation to

Divine command." There is a sad departure from exactness here. The formula is retained, but the ordinance is changed in mode, subject, and idea.

THE BRETHREN.

The sect called the Plymouth Brethren administer by immersion, on a profession of faith, but do not use the evangelical formula. They baptize in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts xix. 5.) This is not a valid form, except on the principle of intention. Every act of the true Christian is to be in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts iii. 6, xvi. 18; Col. iii. 17.) In this omission they stand with the Unitarians, but distinct from the universal practice of Christendom and contrary to the Great Commission.

THE UNITARIANS.

Unitarians, as a rule, are indifferent to baptism and do not encourage its observance. When desired they minister it to the infants of the members of their congregation by sprinkling, pouring, or wetting the face with the finger in the name of Jesus. There are, however, instances in which the minister uses the evangelical formula appointed in Matt. xxviii. 19, placing his own meaning on the expression.

THE GREEK CHURCH.

The great Eastern or Orthodox Church, as its adherents delight to term it, numbers many millions of adherents in Russia and throughout the East. One of its chief distinctive features is the assertion of the necessity of immersion for salvation. Its ritual for baptism is very elaborate. The nurse has the duty of taking the infant as soon as it is eight days old to the ceremony. After

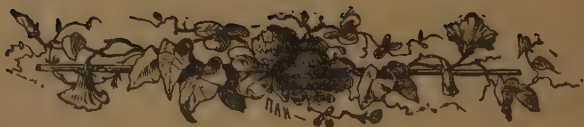
blowing upon the child and making the sign of the cross, and other ceremonies, the priest completely immerses the child—"pulling him down and raising him up" is the direction—three times, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He dexterously places the palm of his right hand over the child's mouth, with the fingers over the eyes and ears, and then dips it face downwards into the holy water. The baby is dressed behind a screen and then given the Sacrament. The sponsors, with lighted tapers, each in turn carrying the child, follow the priest three times around the font. The rites are accompanied by numerous prayers and singing by the choir. The water is sometimes warmed, and even scented, and must be blessed and have a little oil poured into it. One curious part of the ceremony is the anointing connected with the dipping. "The priest takes some of the oil, and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead, the breast, and between the shoulders, saying, 'Blessed be God, who enlighteneth and sanctifieth every man that cometh into the world now and for ever.' Then he signs him on the breast, and says: 'For the healing of soul and body.' Then on the ears, 'for the hearing of faith'; then on the feet, 'that thy steps may advance'; then on the hands: 'Thy hands have made me and fashioned me.' After the baptism the priest puts on the baptized child the garment, saying: 'The servant of God is clothed with the robe of righteousness, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, now and for ever and ever.'"

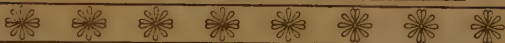
ROMAN CATHOLICS.

In the Roman communion christening, in cases of peril of death, may be administered by anyone, and it is

valid if water and the orthodox formula is used. For full administration in the church a very elaborate ritual is appointed. The old and true idea of profession underlies the ceremony. At the font the priest asks: "Dost thou renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his pomps?" To each of these there must be the response: "I do renounce." All in the singular number. Then: "Dost thou believe in God the Father?" etc., going through the Creed. And the response is: "I believe." The idea of profession by proxy is manifest. Then: "Dost thou desire to be baptized?" Answer: "I desire." "Then, the sponsors holding the infant, the priest, with a little vase or a little pitcher, takes baptismal water and pours it three times on the head of the infant in the form of a cross, and at the same time, uttering the words distinctly and carefully, says: 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, (first he pours) and of the Son, (secondly he pours) and of the Holy Ghost' (thirdly he pours). When the custom is baptizing by immersion, the priest takes the child, and, watching against injury, carefully dips and baptizes by trine immersion." In some rubrics there is a further direction that on uttering the formula the priest first turns to the east, then to the north, and then to the south. Besides this there are several symbolical observances. The priest blows in the face of the child, to drive away the unclean spirit; he puts a little salt on the mouth of the child, as an emblem of wisdom; he takes his spittle, and with it touches the ears, saying "Ephphatha"; and the nose, saying: "In the odour of sanctity." Several times he makes the sign of the cross. After the application of water there is anointing with oil. If a

Protestant asks an instructed Romanist for Scriptural authority for the use of blowing, salt, spittle, or oil, he will probably be told that he may find it in the same chapter and the next verse to that giving authority for infant sprinkling. Romish theologians assert that the church has power to appoint and change ordinances. In debates with Protestants this has been frequently advanced with considerable force. The Roman casuist has often, with triumph, called for some other authority than the Church of Rome for either sprinkling or any other mode than simple immersion, or for the administration to any except professed believers.





Chapter xvi.

ATTACK ON THE CITADEL.

AN examination into the defence of Infant Baptism. The Great Commission. Analogy of Circumcision. Our Lord's welcome to Children. Jewish Sprinklings. Figurative allusions. The Greek word "baptize."



IT is desirable and right to examine with candour the views of those from whom we differ. Especially, as is the case with many writers on this question, when the opinion is advanced with reverence, accented by conscientious conviction, and the appeal made to Holy Scripture. A study of the defence of Pædobaptism leads to the conclusion that the opinion is defended, for the most part, (1) by a consideration of the wording of the Great Commission ; (2) by the analogy of Circumcision ; (3) by the beautiful incident of our Lord's welcoming little children ; and (4) by the mention of the baptism of households. And the defence of sprinkling as the mode

is founded on (1) the appointment of sprinkling in many Jewish ordinances and (2) the figurative use of baptism. Each of these calls for a brief remark.

THE GREAT COMMISSION.

It is urged that the command of our Lord, which all acknowledge to be the supreme authority on the question (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), puts baptism before teaching. That is precisely its place, but it follows discipling. The command reads in the Revised Version: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you."

Disciple-making is first, and is not, as the Gnostic error taught, merely accepting a creed. It implies a change of life. (Luke xiv. 26, 27, 33.) Assuredly unconscious infants are not made disciples before being baptized. In every case of baptism recorded in the New Testament some evidence of faith was previously given, sometimes by rejoicing, sometimes by manifest possession of the Spirit of God, sometimes indeed by divine revelation. The idea of an ordinance being appointed for those outside the pale of spiritual life is discordant with the genius of the Gospel. Our Lord's teaching is directly antagonistic to such a notion. "Except a man be born anew he cannot see the Kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." There can be no admission without the work of the Holy Spirit. *If baptism is a seal, it is ecclesiastical forgery to place it upon one who has not so entered the kingdom.* That those who die in infancy are saved by

the grace of God, by the Blood of Jesus Christ, Baptists never doubt. The imputation of Christ's righteousness is theirs. But the impartation of the Holy Spirit, which is the profession of baptism, is not theirs, and until it is, until "the inward and spiritual grace" is felt, it is not in harmony with truth to give "the outward and visible sign."

ANALÓGY OF CIRCUMCISION.

Circumcision was the initiatory rite into "Judaism," but only for males. It was administered soon after birth and was the mark of temporal privilege. Baptism is the mark of spiritual privilege and is to be attended to soon after the new birth into the Kingdom of God. An analogy is clear: the one was the seal of an earthly covenant, and therefore to be received at the commencement of earthly life, and the other is the seal of a heavenly covenant, and therefore to be attended to at the commencement of a heavenly life. The assertion that baptism comes in the place of circumcision degrades the Gospel, and is never found in the New Testament. In the apostolic allusions to the rite it is never once stated that baptism had taken the place of the Jewish initiatory ceremony. The apostles were frequently engaged in vigorous disputes about the need of circumcision, which would never have arisen had it been the truth that baptism came in its place.

OUR LORD'S WELCOME TO CHILDREN.

That story of unsurpassed beauty and power told by the three Synoptic Gospels is often urged in favor of infant baptism: "And they brought unto Him little children, that He should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was moved

with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me: forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in nowise enter therein. And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands upon them." Now, if there is any part of the divine record in which we might have expected a mention of baptism it is here. Yet there is none. Little confidence can be placed on an argument from silence, but it has singular weight in this place. *Jesus Christ had nothing to do with infant baptism.*

Surely no one will attempt to bring the charge against Baptists as a body of indifference in leading their children to Christ. The truth is the other way. The right view of baptism tends to increase anxiety for the conversion of young people, whilst it is sometimes the case that the observance of infant baptism has bred an unholy confidence growing into neglect. The exhortation which our Lord gave after receiving the children was in reference to their character. To receive the Kingdom of God we are not to be as unconscious babes but like teachable, unprejudiced children. The children in the narrative were brought indeed, but Jesus desired that they should come, His command was not that they were to be unintelligently baptized, but not hindered in approaching Him.

JEWISH SPRINKLINGS.

Among the ceremonies of the Jewish Dispensation there were ordinances of pouring and of sprinkling, as on the doorposts on the night of the Passover, and in the cleansing of the leper. Allusions are found to this in

such passages as "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25), or "So shall He sprinkle many nations" (Isa. lii. 15), or "The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 2.) The point to be noted is that in not one single case is there a reference to baptism in a passage in which the word "sprinkle" is found. It was in common use, and would very naturally have occurred to the inspired writers had baptism ever been administered in that mode. If, in Heb. x. 22, there is sought for a suggestion of baptism, it is not in the sprinkling of the heart, but in the washing of the body with pure water. A very curious, novel argument has been advanced in a book on Christian Baptism, recently issued by the Congregational Union of England and Wales. The writer says: "Still more conclusive is Sirach xxxiv. 25: 'He that baptizeth himself after touching a dead body.' The indisputable reference is to the purification enjoined in Num. xix. 9-22, which is four times directed to be performed, not by immersion, but by sprinkling." The exact words are quoted that the writer may not be misjudged. In ecclesiastical argument it is always well to verify quotations. It is true that there are four allusions to sprinkling, but the nineteenth verse reads: "On the seventh day he shall purify himself and wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even." So in Lev. xiv. 9: "On the seventh day . . . he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean." In the chapter in Numbers there are directions for sprinkling and for bathing. But from the connection it is evident that it was the personal bathing, and not the ceremonial sprinkling, to which

Sirach made allusion. That argument, when carefully looked into, is not the only one of its class, which is like a split rifle—more mischievous to those who use it than to their adversaries.

FIGURATIVE ALLUSION.

The term "Baptism of the Holy Ghost" has a fuller meaning when rightly translated. "Immersion in the Holy Ghost" being plunged into, overwhelmed with, His glorious excellence. Baptist was the Greek term for a dyer, one who dips foul garments to cleanse them, and to give them a new color. The term tingeing (or dyeing, or re-coloring) was often used by the Greek fathers of the early church in referring to baptism. This is similar to the modern use of phrases of a similar kind, as when we speak of a person being immersed in business, overwhelmed with anxiety, bathed in gladness, or plunged into grief. An argument has been formed upon the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, somewhat overlooking the fact that the word "descend" does not occur in the narrative, but that the actual expression is "it filled all the house where they were sitting;" they were all immersed, baptized in power. Our Lord spoke of a baptism of sorrow, surely a being plunged into it, not sprinkled with it. Paul in more than one place speaks of the ordinance as a burial, which is a baptism in earth. For the word "baptize" like its English equivalent, "dip," does not necessarily denote water; so that the expression "baptism in water" is not pleonastic although "baptism by immersion" is. And while the fashionable mode of christening is all but devoid of meaning, Scriptural baptism is full of spiritual metaphor. Our need and gain in Christ is not a sprinkling of grace,

but to be cleansed from all uncleanness from head to foot, to have our course and character re-colored in every part, to die to this world, and be buried with Christ and rise to a new and nobler life. Led by the trusted and beloved pastor, the trembling candidate thus rehearses his hope with regard to the great change ; he descends into the water as a tomb, enters the darkness, but supported by a strong arm he comes forth into the light as one renewed, amid the songs of the Church of God, and hastens to put on the glorious white garments of eternal joy.

THE WORD "BAPTIZE."

This Greek word is a form of the word "*bapto*" which means to dip, not necessarily in water. Like our word "dip" it was employed freely. It was used to denote the tempering of steel, which is by dipping in water when at a certain heat. It was used to express the plunging of a sword into a wound. The last syllable "ize" is now almost an English recognized addition to words, meaning to do, as when we say "botanize" to study botany, or "stigmatize" to make a stigma. The Greek word can never be accurately translated by words meaning pouring, much less sprinkling. But it may always be rendered correctly if not elegantly, by "immerse." Ships were baptized, that is sunk, immersed in the water. Drunken men were baptized, that is soaked, immersed in wine, a classical use of the word which may throw light on Eph. v. 18. In an examination a boy was baptized in questions, overwhelmed with them. A baptistery was a public bath where persons could immerse themselves in water. A cork was called "*abaptist*" (a being negative)

because it could not well be dipped. A surgeon's trepanning instrument was called "*abaptistum*" because it would cut the skull but not dip into the brain. This, however, is a question for Greek students. But the unlearned can put it to a very simple and easy test. He is recommended to look up passages in which the word occurs and try which of the two, "sprinkle" or "immerse," gives the better sense. As for example: "John was sprinkling in Ænon near to Salem because there was much water there" (John iii. 23); "I have a sprinkling to be sprinkled with" (Luke xii. 50); "The same is He who sprinkleth with the Holy Ghost" (John i. 33); "Know ye not that so many of you as were sprinkled into Jesus Christ were sprinkled into His death. Therefore we are buried with Him by sprinkling into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The theme is solemn, so that it scarcely admits of an appeal to the ludicrous, but there is peril of it degenerating into that when the attempt is made to import into the meaning of the word a sense of a totally different character.



Chapter xlviii.

CONCLUSION.

DISTINCTION between Individualism and Collectivism. Recapitulation. The great importance of being right on this subject and of personal obedience.



AT the base of the distinction between believers' baptism and infant sprinkling may be found the distinction of Individualism and Collectivism. This is a consideration of the very first importance. The religion of Jesus is profoundly individual : the perversion of Rome is collective. We are not to be saved by being united with a church, but are united with a church because we are saved. The Scriptural doctrine is not that the church is saved as a whole, and separate souls are saved by coming into union with it, so that baptism is regeneration, but on the contrary, that every one shall give account of himself to God. Here is the old question with regard to the operations of the Holy Ghost. Does He come direct to human spirits ? Or to an ecclesiastical system, in union with which His benediction is obtained ? If the latter, then the baptism of the youngest babes is right and they are redeemed by it. If the former, then no one should attend to the symbol of baptism until he has experienced the regenerating grace of the Spirit of the Lord.

RECAPITULATION.

The New Testament proclaims one baptism, which is the Church's seal; upon profession of discipleship indeed, but the discipleship of Christ. (John xv. 8.) Very early the error of mistaking the seal for the deed crept in and a belief in regeneration by baptism arose, which led to the administration of the rite to infants, introduced about the third century. It also led to a change to that of aspersion in cases of impending death, but no sanction of any other mode than immersion except in circumstances of peril was known until a thousand years after the appointment. The Reformation was very incomplete, but it was not until that period that the practice of sprinkling for dedication arose and took the place of baptism. Trine immersion was practised in many places but was not universal. The repetition of the plunging, and the addition of anointing and the use of salt, and other ceremonies, however ancient, have no Scriptural authority and therefore have to be rejected by all who make their appeal to Holy Scripture.

IS IT OF CONSEQUENCE?

Here we touch the root of the whole question. It is a solemn fact that many Christians acknowledge Baptists to be right, but assert that baptism is of no consequence. They say Christianity is spiritual, and baptism is a ceremony. This is true, but there is a deeper question. True spirituality is obedience to Jesus Christ and imitation of His example. His first example was baptism, and His latest precept was baptism. In the New Testament we think we have the mind of Christ, and baptism is found in every part. Another question often arises. Is not the spirit of the command of more importance than the letter? True, but in a rite the letter is important,

for the spirit is exact obedience. His command is not grievous. As the first act of the new life it cannot but be important that the obedience should be implicit and unreserved. The New Testament instruction and the modern practice are so diverse that it is difficult to call submission to a rite so much altered an act of obedience even to the spirit of our Lord's ordinance. If in an engineering factory a new workman were ordered to make a wheel with thirty cogs and he sent in one with twenty, which he had made more easily, and in ignorance thought might do as well, it would be considered a very unsatisfactory beginning. The indifferent spirit of "that will do" is far from commendable in any department of life, much less in the highest, which is religion. Had it been the will of our Lord that a few drops of water on the face would stand for an immersion of the whole body, surely there would have been some intimation in the Bible. It ill becomes a soldier at the outset of his career to cavil at his instructions. In one point at least the wisdom of the ordinance is seen: it sets forth in emblem the thoroughness of true discipleship.

PERSONAL OBEDIENCE.

The spirit of true Christianity is obedience to Christ, and that without reference to ecclesiastical tradition or to the belief and conduct of others. The disciple, possibly as a test of character, is often placed amid circumstances where he must be willing, if need be, to take his place among the few. At times it seems as though it were the will of the Great Shepherd to lead into dark valleys, where, apparently, the disciple walks alone with Christ. Then, his faithfulness having been tried, he is brought to a larger place, where there is a great company, and he gains the distinguished honor of

having been found faithful amidst circumstances which test character. There is this difference of thought ever underlying action: the men of the world act in reference to the multitude, the Christian to Christ. Considering this a solemn importance marks the whole Christian career. None know aright what is great and what is small in following Christ. Imagined insignificance is the base coin in imitation of humility. No Christian can tell the possible far-reaching effects of an act of obedience, especially if in rendering it he seems to stand with but a few. The humblest knows not what glorious result, especially in such an age as this, might accrue from his personal submission to baptism. The attitude now taken by many that baptism is right, but that the sacrifice personal obedience would entail is not called for, is most indefensible. Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, we are dear to Him who bought us at such a price and our great care should be to attend to His every desire, delighted to obey Him who has done so much for us. Faithfulness has a regal power. Many rich flowers and a harvest of fruit may be the result of a single seed which a feeble hand may sow. Our obedience and our hesitation to obey are noticed. We are made a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. But, more than all, we are incessantly watched by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is ever at hand, not simply to protect from harm, but to ascertain how far we are resolved, at any cost and in defiance of the world, to obey His commands. In His Sermon on the Mount, He said: "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."



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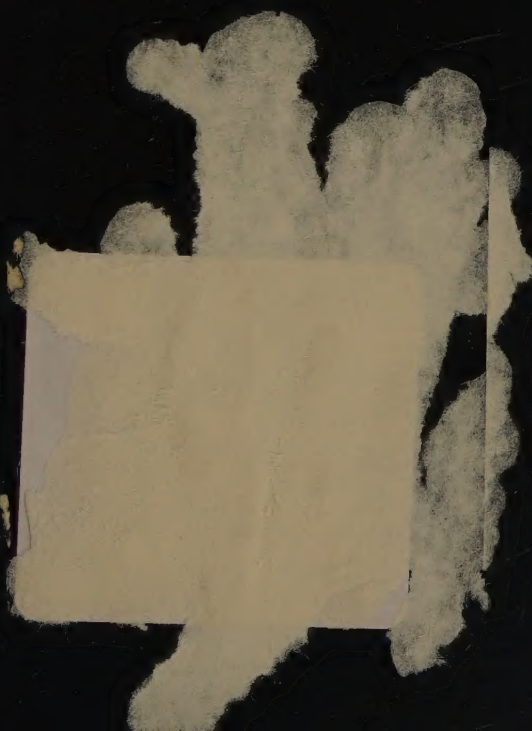
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